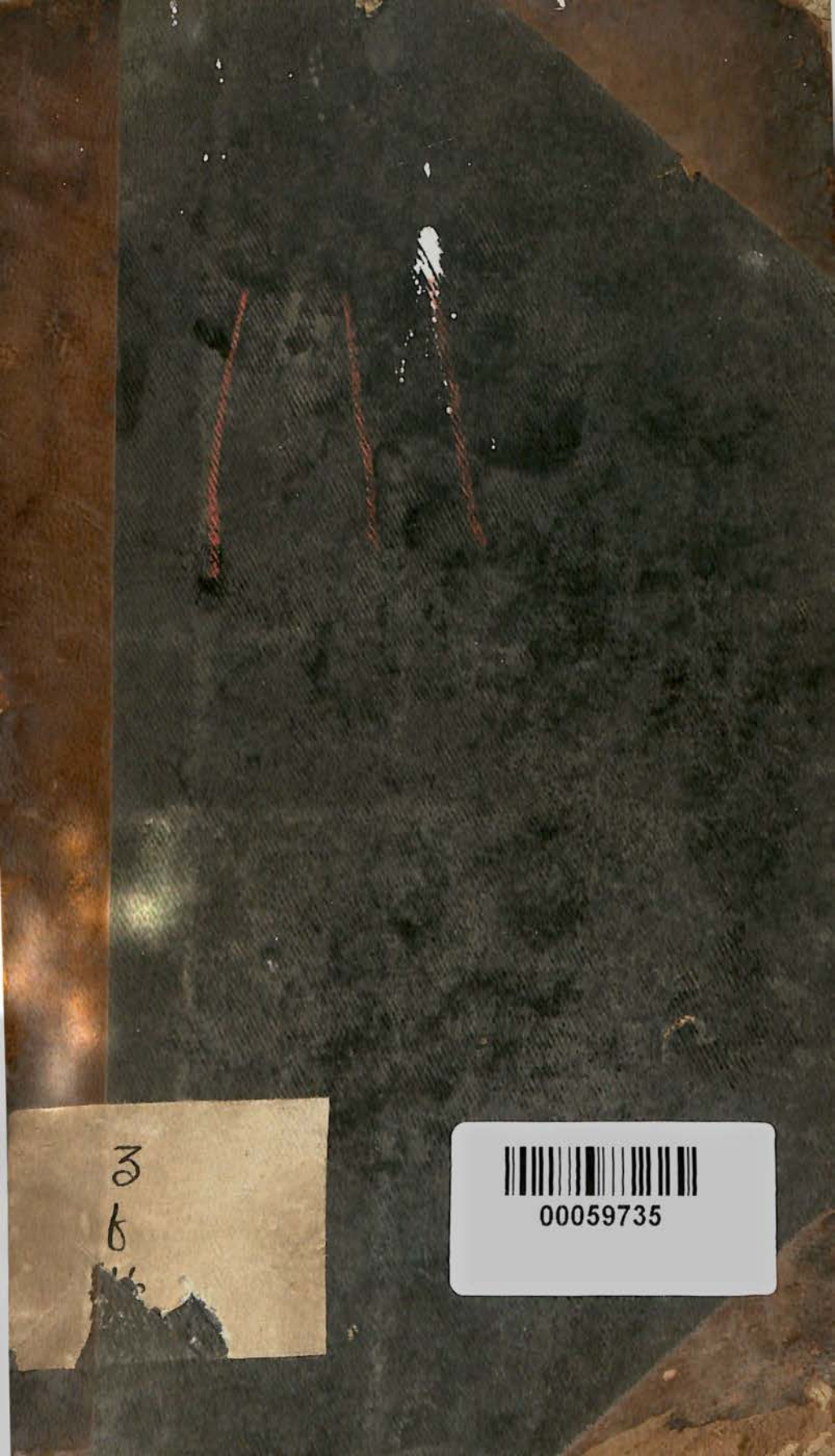
00059735

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018

THE

LIGHT OF NATURE

PURSUED,

BY

ABRAHAM TUCKER, Esq.

Second Edition,

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

59735
ae

TOGETHER WITH

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

SIR H. P. ST. JOHN MILDMAY, BART. M. P.

VOL. V.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET; AND T. PAYNE, MEWS-GATE, CHARING-CROSS.

Brettell, Printer, Marshall Street, Golden Square.

1805.

00059735

CONTENTS.

VOL. V.

PAGE

CHAP. I. *Partition of the General Rule* - - 1

——— II. *Esoterics and Exoterics* - - - - - 40

——— III. *Divine Purity* - - - - - - - - - 61

——— IV. *Majesty* - - - - - - - - - - - - 80

——— V. *Holiness* - - - - - - - - - - - - 100

——— VI. *Things Providential* - - - - - - 196

——— VII. *Religion* - - - - - - - - - - - 275

——— VIII. *Freedom of Thought* - - - - - 323

——— IX. *Vanity* - - - - - - - - - - - - 360

——— X. *Things above Reason* - - - - - - 438

——— XI. *Miracles* - - - - - - - - - - - - 457

——— XII. *Grace* - - - - - - - - - - - - 505

——— XIII. *Trinity* - - - - - - - - - - - 528

——— XIV. *Redemption* - - - - - - - - - 591

THE

LIGHT OF NATURE PURSUED.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

CHAP. I.

Partition of the General Rule.

NATURE has given to each species of animals some distinguishing power or quality for their preservation and entertainment. The lion lives by his courage: the elephant by his strength: the swine by his sturdiness. The squirrel delights in his agility: the swallow in the strength and swiftness of his wing. The spider seeks his maintenance from his cunning: the bee from her industry. The nation of flies and little fishes, artless and defenceless, exposed for a prey to all other creatures, subsist by their prolificness, multiplying them in greater numbers than all other creatures can destroy. To man she has given understanding to supply the want of strength, robustness, agility, and sagacity of instinct,

wherein he falls short of his brother animals; and to make the qualities he finds in them subservient to his own uses. Therefore our understanding is the faculty it behoves us most sedulously to cultivate, because from that we may principally expect to receive a supply of our uses and enjoyments.

Yet we need not too much despise our fellow-creatures for the want of it: for we cannot enter into their ideas, nor know for certain whether their lives do not pass as pleasurably as our own. We know our pains are doubled by reflection, and perhaps it does not add much to our pleasures, which are made thereby to satiate the sooner: if we have funds of entertainment unknown to them, we have likewise many sources of disquietude and anxiety in our consciousness and foresight, from which they are exempt: nor have there been those wanting among us who have acknowledged they passed happier days while children or schoolboys, than they ever tasted among the fruits of reason when ripened to full maturity. One thing we may rest assured of, that nature being established in perfect wisdom, assigns to every creature the faculties and powers suitable to its station: so that all alike perform their part in the public services of the universe.

Neither would it do us any good, nor ought it to give us any pleasure, if we could prove

the

the condition of other animals ever so wretched and despicable: for our happiness is to be estimated by the quantity we possess, not by the proportion it bears to that of other creatures. If their condition any ways affects us, it should be by the goodness of it; which will naturally incline us to think the most favourable of them possible. For as our heavenly Father displays his goodness by giving the young ravens their food when they cry, so we shall best display our own by rejoicing that they have their food when they cry for it: for the prospect of good and enjoyment anywhere is a feast to the rightly-turned mind. Therefore instead of delighting to draw comparisons between ourselves and the irrational tribes, or studying to exaggerate our own nobility and pre-eminence of privileges above them, we should better imitate the most perfect of all beings by entertaining a good will and favourable inclination towards them; which would keep our ears open to whatever can be suggested for their advantage, and make us even wish they might inherit a portion in futurity, if any solid argument can be brought in support of it.

Nevertheless, as water supplies breath to fishes, and hay nourishes the cattle, yet are unfit for the respiration and sustenance of man; wherefore we choose the fresh air and wholesome food; not because a nobler kind of support, but

because better suited to our constitution; so let us avail ourselves of our rational faculty, not for the pride of its superior excellence, but for its being more particularly adapted to our uses. For sense and appetite may prove infallible guides to the species put under their direction, yet would perpetually lead us astray: and nastiness, however giving a real enjoyment to the swine, perhaps greater than we find in our perfumes, or even in the contemplation of our sciences, would fill us with disorder and loathing. So that without thinking any thing contemptible in itself wherever nature has placed it, we may despise bestial appetites as ignoble and unworthy of us, because we have another faculty we may employ to higher uses and nobler advantages than we can receive from them. Thus it becomes our glory to improve our understanding, to raise it above the mire of appetite and passion, and approach as near as our capacities will permit to that openness and largeness of mind we believe belonging to superior orders of Being.

2. But as man differs from beast in the faculty of understanding, so does one man differ from another in the degrees of this faculty. Yet he that possesses a large share need not think himself more highly favoured by Heaven, nor despise his weaker brother upon that account; for his talents are given him for the public service,

so

so that others have an interest in them equally with himself: nor can we doubt that Providence dispenses to every one the qualifications proper for performing the part he has to act, and which rightly employed may be productive of happiness, the only thing that makes all other possessions valuable. Therefore let every one, according as provided by nature or education with the means of cultivating his understanding, improve it to the greatest height he can attain, as the task peculiarly assigned him, deeming it ignoble and unbecoming to stand at a lower pitch: yet without thinking meanly of others who are called to other duties. For true honour results, not from the talents we possess, nor the part allotted us, but from the manner of our employing them, and the justness of our action.

But the improvement of understanding goes on by slow degrees, and the first advances towards it are made by laying in a stock of materials, whose uses we are to find out after we have secured the possession of them. Hence comes the desire of knowledge which the inquisitive mind thirsts after, even in matters of curiosity and speculation; as not knowing what real benefit may be afterwards stricken out of them. Besides, the work of science being large, requires many labourers to take in hand the several parts of it: so that a man

has

has a chance of being useful by making discoveries whereof he can find no use, because the materials he furnishes may be turned to good advantage by somebody else. Nevertheless, use being the proper end of knowledge, it behoves us to turn our enquiries into the way that may lead to something profitable: leaving nothing to other hands that we are capable of executing ourselves.

Upon this principle I have endeavoured to conduct myself in the two former volumes: wherein, how much soever dealing in matters of curiosity and novelty, I have all along had real benefit in view; and have passed over several curious subjects occurring upon the way, because they seemed unavailing to the main purpose. It having been my intention to draw up such a scheme of nature and the fundamentals of natural religion, founded upon the basis of experience and observations resulting therefrom as might appear compact and consistent throughout to the studious and dispassionate; yet I do not present it as convenient for common use, nor deny that it may contain some parts disgustful, or even dangerous to common apprehensions; therefore since I cannot content myself with doing a little service while there seems a possibility of doing more; I shall now apply my attention to general convenience, and endeavour to produce something wherein the plain

plain man may find his account: yet striving if possible so to connect my following labours with the foregoing that the studious and clear-sighted shall not take exceptions against them.

3. We have seen that sense and appetite are the first springs of action, impelling to objects that have been found grateful and driving from the contrary. In process of time, as experience grows to maturity, it produces the passions, affections, and habitual desires; which have something pleasing or disagreeable to sense for their object, and urge to the means apprehended requisite for procuring or escaping it. These incentives are given to all animals to spur on their activity, and find it continual employment: whence it appears that present pleasure and gratification are the natural motives to action. But besides these, man possesses the faculty of understanding, which presents a large scene of objects to his view: so that while appetite and sense are busied in their present pursuits, he can contemplate the remote consequences of measures, and make an estimate of their whole amount.

Hence arises a new object of pursuit, which is Good, commonly distinguished from pleasure, yet differing rather in quantity than kind: for good, as Mr. Locke observes, is that which produces pleasure, and this plea-

sure

sure must come to be present some time or other, or it will not deserve the name. Thus pleasure and gratification still remain the motive even of rational undertakings; but the greater distant enjoyment in preference to the less near at hand. Nevertheless, man partakes so much of the beast as that his active powers lie constantly under the guidance of appetite and desire: wherefore it avails nothing for reason to discern what is good, unless she can raise such a desire as shall find gratification in the approach towards it, or vexation in the apprehension of missing it.

Now reason has in some measure a power to raise such desires: for by often figuring the distant good as present in imagination, she may at length bring desire to fasten upon certain rules and measures of conduct leading towards it; and thereby generate a new set of senses, usually styled the moral: which, when fully acquired, operate in the same manner with the natural; by impulse to present gratification of them, without regard to further good effects that first gave them their vigour. But men fall into mistakes concerning their moral senses, by entertaining too high an opinion of their understanding: for they suppose it able upon every occasion to penetrate the bottom of their measures, and discern the grounds whereon they were undertaken; so,

finding

finding no inducement beyond the recommendation of the moral sense, they imagine this a notice given immediately by nature, like those of colours, sounds, and tastes, conveyed by the bodily senses. But our understanding, scarce ever capable of looking through the whole length of the line she has run, rests upon certain marks and conclusions, without discerning the reasons prevailing on her to establish them. And if the major part of mankind never worked them out by their own observation and reason, still they derived them by the channels of instruction, example, and custom: but whoever first introduced them into the world, learned their value by having experienced the necessity and expedience of them. Most of our moral senses relate to our intercourse among one another: for as we live in society, we cannot attain our own interests without gaining the assistance and good will of others, which can only be done by returns of mutual good offices to them.

Thus we see the foundation of social virtues lies in our own good: and while we confined our contemplation to this sublunary scene of life, we could not find they had this foundation to support them in some cases that might happen, which therefore remained as exceptions to their obligation. But the sequel of our enquiries having discovered to us our individuality

dividuality and unperishable nature, it appeared that we had an interest in futurity, and became expedient to examine whether that interest might not stand affected by the practice of the social virtues; so that they might still have their proper foundation to support them, even in cases where they tend to our damage in this present life.

We then cast our eyes around upon external nature, which soon led us to the author of nature, whom we found to be One, Omnipotent, Good, and Equitable. From whence it followed that the universe, being the work of one hand, must be formed upon one all-comprehensive plan: the several parts being mutually adjusted, so as to compose altogether one entire Whole; and the laws provided for each particular district, having a respect to the general utility.

We considered likewise that all causes must derive their powers and manners of operation originally from the first; whose omniscience would not permit him to be ignorant of the particular effects they should produce, nor to put them in motion without a design of producing the very effects to result therefrom. Thus all events fall out according to the causes appointed by God; and that provision of causes he makes for bringing them to pass, we call Providence, which extends throughout all

all the regions of his boundless empire. So that no creature in all nature receives a pleasure unless by the divine dispensation, nor falls under a pain unless by the divine permission.

Then upon contemplation of the divine equity, we could find no ground to imagine the stream of bounty should flow unequally: but that however it might appear confined to particular quarters at times, yet upon the whole it would be distributed in like proportion among all the creatures. Thus the good of every creature, being the share belonging to it of the whole good in the creation, cannot be promoted otherwise than by encreasing the common stock. So that though private interest be the ultimate end of action; yet it is so covered by the general interest, that whoever takes his aim at the latter, cannot fail of hitting the former: and whoever aims aside the one, though he may fancy himself gaining a little present advantage, will find in the long run he has missed the other.

4. Thus we have gotten a fundamental rule of reason to be the groundwork of all our schemes and deliberations, namely, the encrease of happiness in nature; but it is neither necessary nor feasible that this rule should actuate us in all our motions: for though the wise man will act always conformably to rule,

he

he need not act always by rule, because when his appetites happen to take the right turn of themselves, there is no occasion for applying any rule to direct them. We have natural appetites given to instigate us in pursuing the means of our security, preservation, and enjoyment: we have derivative desires, either imbibed from other persons, or acquired by our own industry and management, which conduct us to things useful, convenient, and entertaining. While these lead to nothing inconsistent with our fundamental rule, reason has no more to do than stand ready to take alarm in case they should deviate into a dangerous course: nay, she may assist in contriving how to compass any present desire, so it be innocent. For present pleasure and gratification is our good, when tending to nothing hurtful in the consequences: good itself being no more than the way to pleasures which will successively be present: so here appetite and desire may be suffered to work without interruption or control.

But whenever it is expedient for reason to interpose, either in restraining desires when they go astray, or in contracting new ones that may run in a proper course; the advancement of general good is the polar star whereto all her measures ought constantly to point. Yet reason, in the shadowy mazes of life,

life, can seldom get a clear sight of this polar star; therefore wants a magnetic needle to mark the line wherein it lies, and a compass to divide the horizon into distinct compartments: or, to lay aside the figure, our fundamental rule is too general for common use; therefore we must examine what particular rules branch out from thence, which may serve to direct us in the several parts of our conduct.

5. It may perhaps be thought at first sight, that the advancement of general good implies something whereof the universe in general may reap a benefit: but we are too inconsiderable creatures ever to have a prospect of doing such extensive service. Yet the whole being made up of individuals, the general good is promoted by whatever good can be done among them: so that our rule directs us to regard the interests of our fellow-creatures standing within our reach, because by procuring an addition to happines any where, we shall encrease the common stock.

Then it is obvious that each of us is one of the individuals composing the whole, so that the good we procure for ourselves is a like encrease of the common stock with that we can procure for another. Whence it becomes a part of our duty to be regardful of our own interests, to improve our faculties as well of body

body as mind in such manner as may render them most serviceable to ourselves, to provide the means contributing to our own enjoyment, and in our intercourse among others to take care they do not encroach upon our happiness.

For if I please myself by doing something that tends to the greater detriment of another, or if I let him please himself in something that tends to my greater detriment; the common stock will suffer diminution in both cases. Thus our fundamental rule parts into two principal branches, Prudence and Benevolence: the one attentive to our own interests, the other to those of our fellow-creatures: and both together call upon us constantly to prefer either interest, which ever shall appear the more valuable; which two branches are commonly called our duty to ourselves, and to our neighbour.

6. If we reflect upon the grounds whereon we have established our fundamental rule, and the steps whereby we arrived at what knowledge we have of the invisible world and mutual connection of interests, we may recollect they lay solely in the character of that Power who is the Author of all nature visible and invisible. Should we cast aside the thoughts of him, our prospect would lie dark, uncertain, and comfortless before us. We might know

know our own immortality, but should not know how that immortality would pass; whether in wisdom or folly, in plenty or distress, in pleasure or pain, among friends or enemies: nor could we tell what acquisitions to make here that might be depended upon to stand us in stead hereafter. And we should have no inducement from our own interest, that natural and original spring of action, to consult the public benefit; any further than we might expect some advantage from it in this present life: or were we to harbour false thoughts of him, we might imagine him revengeful, severe, impossible to be pleased, the object of dread and terror: or else capricious, partial, delighting to see us worry and torment one another.

Therefore that part of prudence which relates to the solace of our own minds and the pleasing hope of an interest that cannot be hurt by sinister accidents here below, and the interest of our fellow-creatures, so far as it may stand affected by our unreserved goodwill towards them, make it incumbent upon us to cultivate just sentiments of the supreme Being, and practise all methods in our power of strengthening and rectifying them. Whence springs a third branch of the fundamental rule, which is Piety, or our duty to God. For in strictness of speaking we owe no duty

to

to God directly; not that he has no claim to our services, but because there is no real service that we can do him, and he will not require of us impossibilities. For when we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants: our good works add nothing to his strength, or riches, or happiness: if we sing psalms with ever so much devotion and melody, we afford him no entertainment; and if we blaspheme from morning to night, we cannot give him a moment's vexation.

But it is said, God made all things for his glory, and that is the aim we ought constantly to pursue in our several stations. This may be the proper aim to direct us in our proceedings, who cannot always see the remotest of his purposes; but can we suppose this the ultimate end that set his omnipotence in motion? shall we take our conceptions of him from our own tastes and infirmities? or imagine that as an earthly poet labours to compleat his work that he may review the performance with conscious complacence, and make his way to universal fame: so God, tired with an uncomfortable solitude, spread forth his worlds in admirable wisdom and infinite variety, that he might amuse himself with beholding his handy work, and created innumerable hosts of intelligent Beings, to make his hours cheerful with their hallelujahs?

Is

Is it not a more probable construction of the expression, to understand thereby that he made all things in goodness, which is the attribute for which we have most reason to glorify him? and that he expects we should be continually attentive to his glory, because this is most eminently conducive to our happiness? therefore the most effectual way of glorifying him is, by improving the condition of our own minds, and acquiring a steady attachment to the good of our fellow-creatures. For to them we may do service: and what is done unto one of the least of these our brethren, is done unto him. And if he does enjoin us other particular services to exercise our obedience, it is because he knows that obedience most beneficial to ourselves. Thus in all lights it appears, that our duty to God grows out of our duty to ourselves and to our neighbour.

7. Many perhaps may think it a degradation of our duty to God, to make it a secondary obligation: whereas the most judicious and discerning persons have always esteemed it the first and principal duty, to take place before the other two. But so it may well be notwithstanding all we have been saying; for many things in common life, having only a derivative value, yet are prized above their originals. What is money worth, unless for

the necessaries and conveniencies to be had therewith? yet if the house were on fire who would not run to snatch up his cash, and leave his beds, his furniture, the victuals in his larder, to perish in the flames? for his pockets will hold money to purchase more goods than he could possibly carry away upon his back. What is an estate good for unless the produce it will yield? therefore land is valued according to its fertility. Yet who would not rather have his growing crop destroyed than his estate taken from him? and for this obvious reason, because by losing his land he loses all the succeeding crops he might expect to reap from it. So when the interests of religion happen to interfere with public or private interest, they ought nevertheless to be pursued: because more mischief would ensue from a breach made upon them than any present advantage could compensate.

But then care must be taken that the religion, whereto such sacrifice is made, be pure and genuine: which it cannot be unless it tend so much to the benefit of the creatures as to make it worth their while to offer the sacrifice. For religion was given for our good, not for that of the giver; wherefore the fruits it yields are the proper criterion to distinguish between true religion and heresy. We cannot indeed always know those fruits,

for

for they are sometimes brought forth by secret ways we think not of; therefore we are not to reject every thing whereof we do not directly discern the benefit: but whatever opinion or practice tends visibly to the disorder of our own mind, or to lessen our idea of the divine goodness, or to make us remiss in our duties to one another, we may safely pronounce heretical.

If we encourage gloomy and suspicious notions of God, filling us with doubts or despondencies, and making him our dread and terror rather than our protection and confidence: this is not for his glory, which shines brightest in the opinion of his fartherly care and beneficence. If we conceive him partial, confining his favours within some narrow pale: neither is this for his glory, which is the greater by how much the more extensive. If we be prone to censure or detest all who differ from us, either in opinion or way of life: we do not pay obedience to him who expects from us, that we should even love our enemies. If we make our virtue austere, painful, and uninviting; we do not let our light so shine before men as that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. If we place our dependance upon the externals of religion, thinking them acceptable to him for their own

sake, we degrade him in our imagination, as supposing him to want something from us for his own use, and forgetting that his service is what service we can do to one of the least among our brethren. If we continually hunt after sermons and prayers, in neglect of the duties of our station: we prefer that which is only a nominal service to what he will esteem a real one. If we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and make them the sole object of our thoughts: we forget there are duties owing to the rich, to our friends, and to the community; and that obedience does not consist in performing one single branch of duty that happens to touch us strongly, but in applying industriously to every good office wherein we may be serviceable.

8. Since then our own real benefit and that of our fellow-creatures is to be the grand object of our endeavours, and our obedience is best manifested by applying them thereto; we ought to labour to make that benefit as extensive as possible, preferring always the greater good before the less. Whence our principal attention should seem due to the improvement of our condition in another life, as being the more durable and valuable: and to the services of purely spiritual substances, as being more numerous than the embodied falling under our notice. For it has been shewn

in

in the last volume, that neither of these objects lie beyond our reach; our present state being preparatory to the next, and our little transactions answering some uses of invisible Beings. But though they do not lie beyond our reach, they lie in the dark where we cannot possibly grope them out: for we know not how any thing we can do will affect other systems, so might as well do them a displeasure as a service by our officiousness; therefore we have no duty to them, not that we owe them no kindness, but because we know not by what methods we can do them any.

And with regard to our future state, we can gather nothing from experience and observation to direct us what provision to make for it. Our present appetites and desires would be troublesome, and our science useless, in a country where all things are totally dissimilar from that we inhabit now: our virtues being acquired affections, our moral wisdom and sentiments of piety being habitual trains of thinking, connect with the animal machine, because we find them stronger or weaker according as that stands disposed, nor can expect to carry them with us when separated from that: so that we may probably be born into the new world as much a blank paper as ever we came into this. We may have already within us our spiritual body wherein we are to

rise

rise again: and this may receive alteration from our ways of living, and acting, and thinking; for that it should do so, agrees with the course of nature in other cases open to our observation. We know that our pre-existent state of the womb was preparatory to our present, by forming and fashioning those instruments of action we have now to employ. A learned German physician, one Stahl, as we are told by Doctor Hartley, has undertaken to prove that all our automatic or mechanical motions, such as the pulsation of the heart and secretions of the glands, are consequences of certain voluntary motions performed by the fœtus: so that we lay the foundation of our strength or weakness, alertness or stupidity, by our own conduct while yet unborn.

But, without laying stress upon the opinion of a person of uncertain credit, nobody can deny that our condition in this world stands very much affected by what passed with us in the little material world whereof we were the sole inhabitant. For from thence we derive our health and vigour of body, the suppleness of our joints, the perfectness of our limbs, the tablet of our memory, our natural talents and capacities, enabling us to discern, to distinguish, compare, allude, and practise all other exercises conducing to our benefit and entertainment. And though we brought

from

from thence neither knowledge, nor habit, nor expertness, nor accomplishment of any kind, but came away a blank paper: yet our paper is very differently made and variously disposed to receive useful characters upon it, according to the workmanship it underwent in the paper-mill. Nevertheless, no anatomy can lay open our spiritual body to our view, or show in what proportion and lineaments its perfection consists, with what nerves and fibres of the animal frame it connects, or in what particular manner their action affects it: so that we might know the regimen of diet, the courses of exercise, the topics of meditation, the affections, desires, habits, stores of knowledge, and casts of imagination, proper to fashion the little limbs and organs, and render them fit instruments for conveying the notices we shall want to receive, or performing the works we shall have to execute.

9. Thus have we a preparation of the utmost importance to make, without any knowledge how to proceed in the making it. Therefore under this uncertainty let us look up to Heaven for direction: for thither we are privileged to resort when all sublunary means of information fail us. It is currently believed that directions have been delivered by special messengers sent from thence and duly authorised, nor shall I pretend to question

tion their authority: but my province being human reason, I am not intitled to pass the bounds I have prescribed myself. Let us then search about in order to find a mark of direction somewhere within our own territory. Now our reason has led us to the knowledge of one Governor, by whose power and wisdom all things are regulated as well in heaven as upon earth, and consequently that the universe was formed upon one all-comprehensive plan; that the regions it contains are parts of one entire whole, and the laws provided for them severally are but branches of one general polity; so that whatever tends to keep up good order in any part, tends to the preservation of order throughout the whole. Whence the same reason may convince us that by fulfilling our duty as members of the district wherein we are placed, we shall effectually perform our part as citizens of the world.

For as in every well-policied kingdom, the inhabitant who consults the good of his own parish, the professor, the trader, the shopkeeper, the artificer, who performs the functions of his several calling, contributes a share towards the good of the kingdom; and as the schoolboy, who conforms to his master's rules, provides himself with qualities conducive to his better living when he comes out into the world: so if we steadily pursue the interests

interests of our fellow-creatures with whom we have a visible intercourse, and our own temporal interests so far as are consistent with the former; we shall infallibly, though unwittingly, perform all the services we are capable of to our elder brethren of the purely spiritual kind, and fall into the measures most beneficial to our spiritual body as rendering it most capable of activity and enjoyment.

10. Thus the temporal interests of mankind appear to be the magnetic needle constantly pointing to our polar star, and by this we ought to steer our course in the voyage of life: for this will not only render our voyage agreeable, but will prove our safest conductor to the country whereto we are bound. There may be doctrines whose use is not obviously apparent, and will lay ourselves, and even the community, under some temporary inconveniencies; but whatever necessarily introduces disorder and disquiet into our own minds, or tends to the detriment of mankind in general, we may boldly condemn as spurious.

If any very righteous person shall charge me with making religion subservient only to temporal interest, the charge is unjust: for I have endeavoured all along to show that it promotes other interests beside, far more extensive than perhaps he is aware of; but it promotes this likewise at the same time. If

he

he thinks it an undervaluing of religion, to suppose it enjoining nothing that has not a reference to this world: let him consider whether he esteems it for the honour of religion, that any precept should be found in it, which being generally practised, would not make the condition of human life better; or any sentiment of genuine piety which duly inculcated would not add to our tranquillity and solace of mind. For when I talk of temporal interest, I do not confine my thoughts to those external advantages usually engrossing the name. If therefore what is genuine, naturally produces these effects, what has a contrary tendency, however specious it may appear, can carry the form only without the substance of religion.

Therefore we may now, as has been done before by a better authority, compare the kingdom of heaven, as erected in the hearts of men, to a grain of mustard; which, though among the smallest of seeds, grows up into a plant in whose branches the birds of the air may harbour. For though its immediate operation extend no further than to make us satisfied with the universe we live in, to raise us out of ourselves and inspire us with an honest zeal for the good of mankind: yet this little principle wherever taking strong root, casts an influence upon all our actions and sentiments, making life more cheerful, and alleviating

elviating the burdens of it; and if universally prevailing, would banish wars, injuries, greediness, and indolence, and restore a Paradise upon earth. But the misfortune is, that the ordinary narrowness of our views makes the object of this principle difficult to be comprehended: for you can no sooner mention private intererest than you are thought to speak of some advancement in fortune, credit, or station; nor of public, than you convey the idea of commerce, riches, or strength of the nation. Whereas true interest is the same with happiness, which does not derive from any single source, but must be supplied by a multitude of little rills: which we comprise, with Mr. Pope, under three general articles, health, peace, and competence.

11. I shall begin with Competence, as being that which starts up first in the imagination of most people when turning their thoughts upon interest. But as I make so few general articles, I must extend them beyond their ordinary signification, that they may have room to contain all the particulars wanted to be ranged under them: therefore I do not restrain competence to a sufficiency of fortune, but comprehend under it all the externals contributing to the preservation and enjoyment of life. For what avails it for a man to have his pockets full of gold, if he be placed

placed in some desolate spot where no conveniencies are to be had either for love or money? What comfort can he find in perpetual solitude, though with all the materials of pleasure stored plentifully about him? or what enjoyment can he have of his riches or his neighbours, while continually liable to the control of some imperious master? So that besides money, there are opportunities of laying it properly out: besides meats and drinks, house room and furniture, there are society and liberty among the ingredients requisite for making up a competence.

And for the community, though riches, strength, and law be the main pillars of security and liberty, nevertheless, the arts, sciences, manners, manufactures, commodities, and materials of innocent amusement, go to compleat the competence of a nation. Therefore let every man take that part in the public service belonging to him. The great men watch over the main pillars, to preserve them from decay or damage: and it is their business to take care that in their hurry of shoving away one another from the work, they do not shove the pillar itself. But this is not the task for persons of private station, who have no skill in masonry, nor means of acquiring any: for they may thrum over Britons, North-Britons, and Monitors from morning

morning to night, without being ever the wiser. Therefore if they would study to mend something in their family, their acquaintance or their neighbourhood, this would be the most effectual method in their power towards mending the affairs of the nation.

But it is a common mistake to imagine that, by continually adding to some particular branch of competence, we shall always render it more compleat: for competence is as much destroyed by redundancy as by deficiency. A multitude of goods greater than one can use, is a burden and an incumbrance rather than a benefit: an acquaintance may be too numerons as well as too narrow: and a total exemption from check and control often betrays into irretrievable mischiefs. For as perfection in the human body consists in the apt proportion of its parts; so our stock of externals cannot encrease exorbitantly in one part without falling defective in some other: wherefore due regard must be had to all the necessaries and conveniences of life. The absolute necessaries of nature, without which life and health could not be supported are few: but education, custom, habit, and fashion, create many necessaries which had no existence in nature. However a man may stand disposed in himself, the decent compliance with the world

world will draw some of these necessities upon him: but it is prudent to multiply them as little as possible, because we shall run the hazard of multiplying wants in the same proportion. Therefore, as I have observed in a former place, that desire is gratified alike, either by procuring the objects it affects, or by turning it upon objects we have ready at hand, so in this case it behoves us to examine upon every occasion, whether is the more feasible and eligible method, to provide the necessaries we want, or to make them none by learning to do without them.

But were the world ever so well supplied with necessaries, and divested of all other wants than those they could easily satisfy, still they would not have a sufficient spur to their activity, nor relish to make their hours pass smoothly, if they had nothing else besides necessaries to think on: therefore something must be done for convenience, engagement, and entertainment. For it is the arts and embellishments of life that make the difference between civilized and savage; that keep industry awake, prevent the growth of evil habits nourished by idleness; that cement society by making men needful and helpful to one another; that whet and strengthen the faculties for works of greatest necessity and importance. If they are often

pursued

pursued too strongly, it is the excess alone that vitiates the pursuit: for what tends only to promote cheerfulness, ease, and amusement, if it draw no bad consequences nor interrupt any more valuable work, is a mite added to the sum of happiness.

Nor is it impossible they may add more than the mite, for when we reflect on the constitution of our corporeal and mental organs requiring recreation and diversion, and the natural utter incapacity of some persons for weighty undertakings; we may rationally presume that God, who carries both worlds in view and has more purposes than one in his dispensations, has made our innocent amusements productive of important uses unknown and undiscernible to us. For it had been easy for him to have made us all serious and solemn creatures, capable of incessant labour and intense thought, without ear for music, without eye for neatness, elegance or beauty, without taste for building or gardening, and without relish for diversion; if he had judged it for the benefit of his creation.

12. The next article, Health, I must likewise take in a larger latitude than ordinarily given it: comprising not only what relates to the prevention of diseases, and keeping the body clear of foulness, but also the bringing

the

the limbs, organs, faculties, and other parts of our frame, into such state wherein they may best perform the services we shall require of them. This cannot be denied a matter of great importance: for what signifies competence to a distempered body that can receive no enjoyment, or an unexperienced mind that knows not how to reap the proper advantages from it.

To this article belong the cares of nurture and education, those exercises and instructions that teach the management of the limbs or give expertness in marshaling the thoughts, and in general whatever can be called learning or accomplishment. Nor must we leave out the virtues and moral senses, the knowledge of men and things, the acquiring tastes, desires, and habits, which may contribute to our use and entertainment, and the quickening our activity so as that it may support us under labour when necessary, and carry us through our ordinary transactions with ease, readiness, and alacrity. For he cannot be reckoned sound and healthful throughout, who has contracted viscious appetites, turbulent passions, or inconvenient habits; whose faculties are weakened, inexpert to perform their functions, or ill supplied with their proper nourishment; or whose active powers are stiffened by the scurvy of idleness.

But

But as we have not all the same part to act in life, this health is relative; that being compleat in one man, which would prove defective in another. The weaver wants not the sturdiness and intrepidity of the soldier: nor does the latter want the nice finger of a musician, nor variegated imagination of the poet. Delicacy and elegance would do hurt to the porter: and his endurance of nastiness and coarse living might be improper for the nobleman. Wherefore let us consider situations and circumstances: and let each man lay in the particular stock of health and vigour most suitable to his constitution, fittest for his own services and those he owes to others with whom he has intercourse. Yet there is one branch of health which, like the lively smooth beatings of the pulse, suits well with all conditions: an alert spirit, ready to make the proper use of every present occasion, so that there may remain no vacant hours unsupplied either by business or diversion; proceeding without trepidation or anxiety, yet without intermission or sluggishness. Sometimes an entire relaxation is necessary, and so is sleep; but where there is this alertness in the constitution, neither will be suffered to steal away any more of our time than we find requisite for our refreshment.

But an ill habit, whether of body or mind, is not to be rectified, nor dexterity of any kind in either to be gotten, presently: for preparations are to be made, many externals provided, to help on the acquisition, and gradations passed through to render it compleat. So that the article of health, in this comprehensive signification, will take up much of our thoughts and industry to establish it in ourselves and contribute towards perfecting it in the community, so far as our little power and opportunities extend. And to gain any success, we must proceed with discretion as well as resolution, driving the nail that will go, regarding rather what is feasible than what is desirable; looking round on all sides to observe remote consequences, learning how to mingle steadiness with compliance, becoming all things to all men, humouring times and companies, yet without being ever compelled or seduced to act against our judgment.

13. The third article, Peace, relates to the tranquillity and solace of the mind: this is the most important of the three, and indeed the other two are valuable only as they contribute to this. For externals will set the mind at peace for a while, when newly acquired or near in expectation: and so will an advance-

advancement in any science or dexterity, a new discovery, a curiosity, a diversion, or indulgence of appetite. But these are only casual and temporary expedients, to be had just when luck befriends us; soothing for the present and often drawing on a greater disquietude. The only secure and durable peace the mind can expect, must come from her own fund: when she is stored with sentiments continually prompting to a right course of behaviour, satisfied with her own actions, and apt to content herself with whatever befals her.

Some have placed happines solely in this rectitude of temper, despising externals and endowments of body or mind, as matters of mere indifference: but we cannot go so far, for rectitude seems too airy to stand without some more solid ground. Nothing were right unless something else were valuable which it is right to pursue: even justice could have no rectitude, if there were no goodness in property, which it tends to preserve. And though the mind may feel satisfaction in the rectitude of her deeds without view to consequences, yet this is a translated satisfaction, which must wear away unless renewed from time to time by experience of the consequences.

Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that, much of the good to be received from other things depends upon the inward turn and disposition, and that this will sometimes ensure peace when all other sources fail. For what avails an abundance of goods and possessions, an exuberance of health, quickness of parts and store of accomplishments, if the mind be restless within herself, always hankering after what she has not, rather than using and enjoying what she has? on the contrary, distress, disease, and incapacity, become heavier or lighter burdens in proportion to the firmness of mind there is to support them; and perhaps were this firmness compleat, it must render the weightiest of them easy, for there is always something to be done towards making our condition better; and till this can be achieved, the mind may find solace from the endeavours she uses in advancing towards it. But as such perfect soundness, proof against all accidents that can intervene, is scarce attainable in practice, it behoves us to provide against the weakness of human nature, and if possible avoid putting it to trials greater than it can bear.

Whence it becomes a branch of necessary prudence to endeavour placing ourselves in the situation, and to take up the employments,

ments, best suited to our taste and genius; for therein we shall be likely to pass our time comfortably, and to do our work most successfully: as likewise to avoid having much intercourse with persons of odd and difficult characters, enough to ruffle a philosopher, or whose ways and humours are greatly discordant from our own; especially in those connections which are likely to be of long continuance and cannot be broken off whenever we will. But since we have not always our choice in these particulars, there is the more reason to provide a resource within ourselves by a robustness and serenity of mind, not easy to be thrown off the hinges by unfavourable accidents. Which temper is not to be gained by a single effort how strenuous soever: for it is a habit and must be nourished up gradually by vigilance and constant exercise; yet every single effort is a help towards the growth of the habit, and the contracting it in little matters renders it more easy to be contracted in greater.

Therefore no opportunity is to be lost or overlooked for rendering peace habitual to the mind by checking every little motion to fretfulness or peevishness, averseness to trouble, apprehension of danger, regret at a loss, vexation for a disappointment, impatience for

for a pleasure, hurry in an undertaking, or anxiety under a suspense that rises in the breast: nor ought any thing practicable to be omitted for spreading peace amongst other people, whether by exhortation, advice, example, exclamation, humour, ridicule, or whatever method is most suitable to the occasion. But though something may be done towards quieting the mind by dint of resolution, yet we shall succeed more effectually if we can get some soothing prospect to assist us: for present uneasiness cannot always be assuaged unless by thoughts of absent good. Therefore the ground and never-failing source of peace is, Hope, which arises from an impartial contemplation of nature: for if we survey it through false glasses, so as to persuade ourselves that men are born enemies to one another, and that the condition of creatures, a very few excepted, is wretched and despicable; this will be more likely to fill us with melancholy and horror than with comfort: but a candid and benevolent temper will discover so many advantages and enjoyments everywhere as to give us a cheerful idea of the world we live in.

Yet this idea cannot have its full effect without religion, which alone can ensure us a share in the stream of bounty that flows copiously

copiously on all sides, and opens a much larger and richer prospect into the invisible world than this narrow earth can afford. Nevertheless, care must be taken not to embrace every thing hastily that carries the appearance of Religion: for many by an unjudicious earnestness to become religious, have filled themselves with doubts and despondencies, destroyed their own peace, entertained an unfavourable opinion as well of their fellow-creatures as of the creation, and thought narrowly and unworthily of their Creator. Wherefore it is of the utmost importance, and deserves our principal attention, to cultivate just sentiments of him, and as he wants not our adoration nor our services, but has vouchsafed so much knowledge of himself as he judges needful, and given us religion for our benefit; we may be sure that is the truest which tends most to preserve our minds in a steady tenor, to draw us out of hurtful courses, and make us profitable to one another.

CHAP. II.

ESOTERICS AND EXOTERICS.

RELIGION, although justly styled the service of God, because then only having the true and real value when performed in obedience to his Will, yet was not given to serve himself, but his creatures: therefore must be adapted to their needs and their natures, in order to become serviceable to them. But human nature being very various among people and individuals according to their capacities, endowments or casts of imagination; their diversity of characters requires a different management to serve them effectually. And you may as well think of setting out a measure of clothes that shall fit every body, as of drawing up a compleat system of Religion accommodated to the uses of all mankind.

Much discourse has passed in the world upon uniformity, and indeed an uniformity of profession were a desirable thing, as preventing discordance among mankind, and a contempt of Religion in general. For religious feuds being the most mischievous and rancorous of any, no care can be too great to

avoid

avoid them. Nor is any thing more contrary to the grand purpose of Religion, the general good, than for men to persuade themselves they do God service in vexing and ill-treating one another: or more injurious to his glory, than to imagine him entertaining a hatred and enmity against his creatures. And the bulk of mankind, unable to strike out any thing of themselves, would have no restraint upon their passions, no awe or dependence, or perhaps no thought of an invisible Power governing both worlds, if they were not let into it by custom and authority: but authority and custom have the stronger influence the more generally they are complied with.

Therefore it is expedient and necessary to have some form of doctrine generally agreed to, for preserving peace and a regard to futurity among the people. And the more concise and simple this form can be contrived, the better: because more comprehensive, as being easier accommodated to the diversity of characters. But no established form can contain the whole of every man's opinions, for unless he strikes out something of his own from what has been taught him, he will make very little proficiency in Religion: and the same expressions convey very different ideas to a number of hearers; so that it is not to be concluded that we have all exactly

actly the same sentiments, because we all join in the same form of words.

How short is the first article of our creed? I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Yet how various are our conceptions of the supreme Being? some conceive him governed by human affections, such as anger, hatred, desire of honour, favour, complacence to those who resemble him; absolutely uncertain of the turns of free-will, unable to make his work perfect, but perpetually interposing to mend what falls out amiss, hurt by offences, which he cannot remit without an amends made him in value. Others believe him exempt from passion of all kinds, acting invariably by reason, just such as ours only not liable to error, and somewhat better informed as having a larger scene to contemplate, proceeding upon the rectitude resulting from a nature of things which was not of his own production. Others again hold him the author of reason itself, of qualities, forms, and essences as well as of substances, leaving nothing to chance or contingency, able to provide adequate causes for bringing all his purposes to bear, never interposing on sudden emergencies from an unforeseen necessity, but in consequence of his own predetermination to interpose.

Then for the epithet Almighty, if any one would

would see what multitude of reflections that alone gives scope to, let him read over doctor Barrow's long sermon upon the Greek word Pantocratoor. Seneca supposed the elements uncreated, and gave that for the reason why the world was not better made, because some of the elements being sluggish and untractable, could not be brought into a compleater form: yet he allowed that God has made as good a world as his materials were capable of. So he would not have scrupled joining with us in repeating, Maker of heaven and earth. And, though now we all believe the materials created by the same hand that worked them up into a regular system, yet we are not so unanimous with respect to the time. It is the common opinion, I suppose, that they were created just when wanted for the uses we see them put to: but many learned and pious men have holden them existent; and perhaps employed in other uses, before the Mosaic creation; much more that the glorious Sun and immeasurably distant stars were above a week older than Adam.

How shall we expound heaven so as to compass an uniformity of sentiments? The common people place it in the atmosphere: whence the expressions of the birds of heaven, the dews of heaven, and the heavens opening when it lightens. Some may begin

it

it just above the atmosphere: others perhaps remove it beyond the starry sphere and visible universe. But when we reflect on the earth's motion in her annual orbit, we shall find that was heaven yesterday which is earth to-day, and the space contained in the room I now sit in will be part of heaven to-morrow. Some perhaps may imagine that heaven is not local, but it is our immersion into body that excludes us from thence: so that if all our material bars could be bursten asunder, we should instantly find ourselves in heaven without removing from our places.

Thus a perfect uniformity of sentiments is neither practicable nor needful: it is enough that we agree together so far as that we may act in concert upon the common occasions of life, and not disturb one another in our religious exercises. Therefore our laws have wisely provided for such an uniformity of profession as is requisite to maintain order and good harmony, and keep alive a sense of religion in all parts of the community: giving full liberty and indulgence to any diversity of opinions that does not tend to invalidate those provisions, and unsettle the minds of the people.

2. Yet is this liberty to be used cautiously: for speculative opinions may have an influence upon practical, and one man's specula-

tions,

tions, though innocent and salutary to himself, may cause disquietude and do mischief in the mind of another, who perhaps will draw inferences from them the author never intended nor would think consequential, tending to overthrow some established tenet, or even subversive of religion and good manners. For in every science, those who make it their business to dive into the depths of it, find a very different scene of things from those who take only so much as is requisite for common use: and as such as have bestowed much thought upon the foundations of right and wrong, discover many contrarieties and absurdities in the popular notions; as on the other hand their refinements appear unintelligible and absurd to the generality. Therefore it behoves every man to regard not only what is rational, consistent, and wholesome to himself, but what will continue so when thrown into a diversely moulded imagination: reserving the former for his private use, or for those of a similar cast, but dealing out the latter only to all comers.

Hence the so noted distinction among philosophers of their esoteric and exoteric doctrines, the one to be trusted only with adepts, the other communicated to the vulgar: or if they did sometimes venture the former in a mixed audience, they couched them under

such

such enigmatical and mysterious terms that nobody could tell what to make of them without the secret enigmatical key. But this reserve of theirs has been commonly placed in a wrong light: as if proceeding from a vain and niggardly temper, fond of hoarding up their treasures for themselves and thinking any worthless scraps good enough for the vulgar. Nor has the word Vulgar contributed a little towards encouraging this notion, as signifying with us a person of mean understanding, little knowledge or accomplishment: so that Adept is regarded as a title of honour and Vulgar as a word of reproach. Whereas in former times the terms were relative to some art, or science, or profession, respectively comprising all who were or were not masters therein: so that the philosopher himself was among the vulgar with regard to commerce, masonry, navigation, or other business he did not understand, and acknowledged such as were skilful in each profession for adepts.

3. Contempt and jealousy are the natural growth of little minds: and pretenders to a knowledge they have not, must affect profoundness and mystery in order to keep the secret of those artifices they employ for getting a false reputation, which would vanish as soon as seen through. But meekness, candour;

openness,

openness of temper and unreserved benignity, are characteristics of the true philosopher. He aims at genuine happiness, not at any spacious glare of it as seen through the optics of passion or fancy. He pursues knowledge for the use, not the credit of it, and desires reputation no further than as it may gain him better attention, and thereby enable him to do better service. He chooses his science, not as the most noble and most elevated above all others, but as most suited to his particular genius and circumstances in life. For he knows the business of the world cannot be carried on without many heads variously qualified, and it behoves each labourer to take that part of the work for which nature and fortune have peculiarly adapted him: that being the most noble and becoming to every one, wherein he may proceed with greatest profit to the community. He sees that active professions are more necessary to the public well-being than speculative, and that many of them require as great acuteness of parts, soundness of judgment, and as piercing sagacity, as the depths of philosophy.

Though his thoughts are continually raised up to objects above the common observance, he does not think himself higher in merit or accomplishment upon that account. For as a sailor

sailor ordered up the main mast top to descry ships, or clouds, or promontories at a distance, though higher in situation, is not higher in rank and eminence than the crew below, who take their measures according to his signals: so he considers himself as placed upon some watch tower, there to sit a careful spectator of the earth with its inhabitants their ways, natures, and all that passes therein, and the heavens with all their glories; only to draw notices from thence for the service of his fellow-labourers, busied in employments below as useful and as laudable.

But he knows that in all professions there are certain technical terms and technical trains of thinking unintelligible to those who are not conversant in the business, though perhaps of superior understandings and more extensive knowledge. Therefore he communicates his notices where he judges they will be understood: for he esteems nothing too good for anybody, but if he withholds his lights from any, it is not owing to a supercilious opinion of their unworthiness, but to their inability to receive them; which inability he does not attribute to a dullness of apprehension, or any other defect that might lessen them in his estimation, but to a want of the preparation necessary for that particular purpose.

4. Nor

4. Nor is he more prone to monopolize than to despise: for what valuables he possesses are of a nature to be imparted without diminishing the stock of the owner. Neither does he grudge any person whatever benefit he can do him; but he knows that one man's meat may prove another man's poison, and it would be no benefit to give another what must disagree with him. So he changes or disguises his potions, not with intention to deceive, but to render them innocent and salubrious. For he studies to make the good he does as extensive as possible, which he knows cannot be effected without paying as much regard to constitutions as to the nature of the remedies. He finds the current language among mankind variable and uncertain, their words changing colours when transported into other phrases, and their expressions variously understood according to the occasion. So he is forced to form a language of his own, the terms whereof may be steady, so as not to entangle his thoughts in equivocations, but capable of being constructed into a compact and regular system, from whence his occasional reasonings may spring like branches growing from a tree.

As he pursues knowledge to its foundations, it appears there in a different form from what it does upon the surface, and leads him into

reflections unfamiliar to common comprehension, because generally unheeded as being useless in common life. For the rules of action often take a different cast from the reasons giving them birth; and like a winding road, seem to carry the traveller quite away from the point whereto they will conduct at last. Therefore he has one set of doctrines for his private use, and another for his neighbours: not that they vary in substance, for the drift of both is to infuse as pure, consistent, and sublime notions of the Deity as possible, to bring the mind satisfied with herself, to direct and animate the receiver in fulfilling the social and prudential duties of his station; but the one is a translation of the other into the vulgar language.

For if he were to deliver his sentiments in his own, he would be so far from dealing honestly with his hearers that he would prevaricate and deceive them egregiously, by conveying ideas the most foreign to his real thoughts. If he talked of interest, they would understand him of getting money or preferment: if he recommended gratification, they would think only of the present fancy starting up in their heads: if he asserted God to be totally exempt from passion or affection, they would imagine there could be neither favour nor vengeance, neither reward nor punishment:

ment: if he represented him incapable of receiving pleasure or vexation from any thing we do, they would suppose it all one in what manner we behave, all actions being beheld with equal indifference by the all-seeing eye. Therefore to convey his real sentiments he must disguise and even contradict them, the idioms of the two languages being so widely different, that to keep the spirit of the original, he must sometimes express himself directly opposite to the articles of his own creed.

5. And the better to satisfy the world with their being dealt with after this manner, we think it probable he will practise the same honest artifice upon himself. For he cannot fail of knowing he is only sensitive-rational: so whatever use he may make of his understanding in speculation, he must not expect to live by reason; but his conduct will be guided by such rules and opinions as he has stored up in his imagination. But imagination will throw her own clumsy shapes and gross colourings upon whatever is deposited with her: nor can she contain any great lengths of refinement without losing them among the sensible objects wherewith she is continually conversant. Therefore he has one cast of mind for the closet, and another to serve him for practice when he enters into

the busy world, accommodated to the scenes he expects to meet with there.

Your beginners in science, fond of a new discovery, cannot lay it aside upon occasion: so they mingle subtilties among their common affairs, and gross ideas among their meditations; which causes a confusion and awkwardness in both. But the perfection of art lies in separating them distinctly: wherein whoever has attained a competent proficiency, will have his particular ranges, and such command over his thoughts as to turn them at any time into the reasonable train. For upon ordinary occurrences he will find it necessary to employ the ministry of the senses, and take the judgments they have been habituated to make: in his intercourse among other people, the force of sympathy will insensibly assimilate his conceptions to theirs; or if he could resist this force, it would only destroy the ease, the freedom, and the mutual benefit of that intercourse.

These circumstances make it often necessary for us to conceive of things otherwise than we know them to be: we know the sun stands still, and the earth rolls round him with inconceivable rapidity; yet to think of the stately fabrics, the spacious cities, the seated mountains, the brimming ocean, and the universal quiescence of a still evening, rushing

rushing forward with such incessant impetuosity, is an idea too unwieldy for our imagination. We know the fire only dissipates, but does not destroy: yet we currently talk of its drying up, consuming, and destroying. We hold matter inert and senseless, but ascribe force to storms and inundations; activity, to spirituous liquors and drugs; inclemency to seasons; kindliness to dews; benignity to vernal gleams; and give bodies other powers and affections belonging to ourselves. Nor can we avoid debasing even the divine essence by figurative expressions, making it tenable, in our imagination: as when we speak of the hand, the finger, the eye, the voice of God, apprehend him pleased or grieved, angry, compassionate, or jealous, and acting in a manner whereinto we ourselves are led by human passions.

Such then being the constitution of human nature, our professor will conform his measures accordingly, nor try to conduct his ordinary behaviour by the sublimities of reason, which would be a fruitless attempt. He will only employ these at convenient hours to store his imagination with such opinions, maxims, habits, moral senses, desires, and conceptions, as may serve him for daily use. And he will follow the golden rule of doing to others as he does to himself, endeavouring to infuse them with such sentiments as may

prove

prove useful and practicable, hiding from them whatever might invalidate or mislead the influence of those sentiments, not aiming to make philosophers of all the world, but reasonable creatures, actuated by such principles as philosophy would recommend. Nor will he neglect to watch over the whole family of imagination, as well in his own breast as elsewhere; in order to correct whatever has run amiss, and alter whatever a variation of circumstances has rendered inexpedient.

6. In humble imitation of this model, I should be glad to make the proper separation between the theoretic and practical doctrines: how well I have managed the point with respect to my private convenience, relates to myself alone, nor does it concern any body else. And with respect to the public convenience, the times are altered since our forefathers used to select their adepts and their vulgar for their several lectures: for the method of lectures is now grown obsolete, nor, were it not, have I either lungs or fluency for the task. For I am not entitled to talk by myself without contradiction in the regular way, and for the irregular of field-preaching I have no opinion, nor yet the talents requisite to succeed: for it is the marvellous, the surprising, the vehement, and the positive, that draw crouded mobs about the gifted preacher; whereas I pretend to no gifts,

gifts, other than are bestowed in common among all who are willing to improve them carefully. So I can only lay out my thoughts in writing, and leave it to chance to dispose of them among all sorts of people, who may fancy they shall find something to like or dislike in them, for curiosity will sometimes shoot as vigorously out of the latter expectation as the former.

Since then I am confined to this only method, I may hope to find excuse for the inconveniencies unavoidably attending it, and that my readers will make the separation it was not in my power to compleat. For either I must have omitted what appeared to me necessary to satisfy the curious, or must venture something unfit for the uses of him who desires only practical knowledge. Therefore, whoever shall find me advancing any thing hurtful to Religion or good manners, let him pass it over as not intended for him, nor what I wish might prevail upon him, and do me the justice to believe I did not discern its tendency. For we have not all the same sagacity and penetration, and he may rest persuaded that if I had had his lights and judgment to have pointed out the evil consequences, I should not only have omitted but rejected it. For I look upon Religion and reason as the gifts of God, whose characteristic being goodness, they must be beneficial

ficial to be genuine: therefore whatever proves detrimental to mankind, carries in that circumstance an evidence of its being false and spurious. Nor have I carelesly thrown out every thing at random, but on the contrary have suppressed some speculations that seemed to me innocent and well grounded, being apprehensive they might give offence: so that I may claim some of the merit ascribed by Roscommon to the versifying tribe, when he says, Poets lose half the praise they might have got, were it but known what they discreetly blot.

As to what esoterics I have vented, such as the foundation of moral duties upon self-interest; the corporeity of mental organs; the homogeneity of created spirits; the rational faculty being a secondary property resulting from the composition of spirit with a fine organization; the dependance of perception, judgment, and free action, upon positions or motions in particles of matter; the universal plan of Providence, comprising all events and leaving no room for contingency; the Attribute of Equity, void of favour, partiality or predilection; the equality of fortunes among spiritual substances; the limited duration of punishment; its exact distribution brought about by natural causes, without needing the formality of a judgment; the balancing periods;

periods; the plenitude of the Universe; the various orders of Beings; their intimate commixture; their free-agency, yet so directed as not to disturb the municipal laws belonging to each other; their mutual connection of interests; their endeavours for the benefit of their own species contributing to maintain the general good; and such like. These seemed necessary to compleat a regular system, to be worked up from the foundations of experience and reason into a compact uniform fabric; wherein there might be nothing loose, incongruous, or unsupported, to offend the penetrating eye of the speculative. And I have been solicitous all along to do what in me lay to prevent any bad tincture they might cast upon the exoterics calculated for popular use: which to my thinking may with proper management be made to grow more healthy from them, although differing in taste and appearance. For it is no uncommon thing for fruits to have qualities opposite to those of the tree that bore them: but we must cultivate the tree, though we need only gather the fruit for our eating.

7. But the tree being valuable only for the fruit, it becomes a prudent gardener to check the luxuriancy of its branches, to engraff, to prune, to distribute and nail the twigs; and in general to cultivate it in such a manner as

that

that it may yield the most plentiful and goodliest produce. Or, to change the metaphor, we may consider the philosopher as a wholesale trader, importing the principles of reason and conduct from all quarters of nature where he can settle a correspondence. If you go to him for the supply of your family, he cannot accommodate you; for he deals only in tons and hogsheads, or quantities larger than you will know what to do with. Besides that your purchase would consist partly of cask and packing, which must encumber your house; and contains a mixture of stalk, and husk, and rubbish, which would require a great deal of skill and trouble in the picking. Or it may be he will shew you piles of plank or bars of ingots, good for no service upon earth until properly manufactured. So it is his business to supply the retailer who may work up his materials into tools and utensils, necessary for the artificer and the private housekeeper: or pick, and sort, and parcel out his wares, and mingle them in such compositions as that you shall scarce know the ingredients, yet shall find them fit for your immediate consumption.

But it being no unprecedented thing for the gardener to carry his own fruit to market, nor for the wholesale dealer to have a separate shop wherein he carries on the retail business:

ness: why may not I be indulged in the like attempt, and permitted to try how the esoterics will look when manufactured in the exoterical form. This is the more commendable enterprize, because great mistakes and absurdities have been committed in the manufactory: so that whatever be the success, the artizans are obliged to me for my good will and endeavours to improve and facilitate the art. Therefore since I have the benefit of the retailer as well as the consumer in view, I cannot wholly lay aside the exercise of the esoteric branch, even while at work upon the exoterics: because I would willingly shew how both may be reconciled so as to assist and co-operate with each other, as springing originally from the same root, and conducing ultimately to the same purpose.

For to proceed securely either way, we must proceed upon our experience in the nature of things; but the thing that it concerns us nearest to study is man himself, whose nature we are principally to regard, and shape our conduct accordingly in the measures we take for his benefit. We have already had chapters upon Imagination and Understanding, Conviction and Persuasion, Knowledge and Conception: wherein we have endeavoured to explain the distinction between

between Reason and Apprehension, to shew that one cannot always follow close upon the other; and that most men constantly, and all men generally, are guided in their motions by the latter. We have seen that the virtues themselves do not become perfect until they grow into desires, raising spontaneously without needing the help of reason to recommend them. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to have a well-ordered imagination, to lay in such stores there as it can receive, and as may invigorate and direct our conduct: for without this, our knowledge cannot be practical, at least so as to serve us upon occasions wherein we shall need it the most.

To have the full use of our understanding, the body must be free from pain and disorder, the spirits alert, the mind quiet and serene, and nothing external to ruffle or disturb us: but in this situation there is no difficulty how to behave. The seasons most needful to provide against are those of hurry and business, sudden emergencies, alluring pleasures, turbulent passions, dangers, distresses, afflictions, and vexations: when we cannot strike out new lights, nor pursue lengths of meditation, but must avail ourselves of such ideas as shall start up spontaneously to the thought. Therefore when leisure permits and opportunity favours, it behoves us to examine

what

what reason would recommend in all circumstances we may be likely to fall under, and furnish our minds with such apprehensions as may be most effectual for the purpose; no matter whether they contain the whole grounds whereon we proceed. And even in our systems of Theology and Religion, designed for ordinary use, regard must be had not only to the nature of things and to what we know, but likewise to the nature of Man and what he is able easily to conceive.

CHAP. III.

DIVINE PURITY.

HAVING found it necessary to consult all parts of our nature, as well our inferior faculties presenting the familiar images and trains of thought rising habitually before our view, as the scientific and rational, in order to frame a set of sentiments that may serve us upon ordinary occasions; it will be proper to begin with compleating our theology. And this brings us to the three remaining Attributes of Purity, Majesty, and Holiness; which had no place among the esoterics as being not discoverable by contemplation of the divine nature alone, nor the administration of Providence,

dence, but rather negative of what is in man, than affirmative of any thing in God. For Purity by the derivation implies an exemption from all foul and heterogeneous mixture: so water is pure when clear of mud and soil, and unmingled with other liquors; gold is pure when undebased by any allay; and the mind is pure when untouched by sordid passions or bestial desires. But these things are capable of having dregs and foulnesses introduced among them, therefore Purity is an excellence, nor can we compleat our idea of perfection in them without it. Whereas the divine essence, being simple and individual, cannot mingle with any thing foreign to itself; and being impassive, not affected by objects of sensation and reflection, can receive no change of state from passions or desires of any kind. One should wonder then why a particular Attribute is assigned the supreme Being, to preserve him from a debasement it is not in his nature to undergo: we might as well make an Attribute of abstemiousness because he lives without eating, or of hardiness because he wears no cloaths to keep him warm.

Nevertheless, it is not so material in this case to consider what is the divine essence, as what is the form and condition of our own imagination. For we cannot behold God intuitively;

intuitively: we can comprehend him no otherwise than by such representation as we are able to frame of him in our thoughts. With the utmost stretch of our understanding, we cannot delineate him exactly, but still find him incomprehensible; and that miniature we carry about in our hearts for constant use, falls short even of the drawings in our understanding: whence our representation no more contains the full character of the original, than the print of a picture or statue does that of the hero it was designed to resemble. So that at best we are all but idolaters, and the materials employed in making up our golden image are drawn from our own fund: for we pick what golden particles we can find in ourselves, whatever we esteem an excellence or greatness, or power, or perfection in man; and raising them to the highest degree we can conceive, thereout form our idea of God. But without due care some of the dross belonging to us will cling to the ingredients, and fix itself insensibly among the composition. This is the Idol we worship, to which we look up for protection, and the continual contemplation whereof assimilates our character gradually to itself: therefore it is of the utmost importance to keep this idea clear of all manner of grossness, weakness, or impurity. The

The Heathen world supposed their Gods not excepting Jove himself the supreme Monarch over all, subject to the vices, the follies, the humours, and the brutal appetites of man: because they found the like among their heroes and excellent persons, the sons and grandsons of God. The Stoics held the material universe to be God, asserted that he was the most perfect animal, of a round form and perpetual activity, whirling round every four and twenty hours: because they could conceive no understanding without material organs to serve for instruments of its operations. There have been Christians called Anthropomorphites, who ascribed to God a human shape, because I suppose they had so much of the Epicurean as to hold that intelligence could not subsist without a brain, and senses, and members such as our own.

And though we have now, I believe, universally discarded all corporeal mixture from the divine essence, except in speaking figuratively of the hand, the eye, the ear, the mouth, which we know to be figurative expressions at the instant of employing them: yet when I hear the enthusiasts and illuminated people talk so feelingly of the finger of God immediately touching their hearts, and insist upon the evidence of sense for their revelations;

tions; I cannot help suspecting they have an idea of something corporeal and sensible operating upon them; and if they call this the immediate act of God, what is it but making God corporeal? I can just remember when the women first taught me to say my prayers; I used to have the idea of a venerable old man, of a composed, benign countenance, with his own hair, clad in a morning gown of a grave coloured flowered damask, sitting in an elbow chair. I am not disturbed at the grossness of my infant theology, it being the best I could then entertain: for I was then much about as wise as Epicurus, having no conception of sense or authority possible out of a human form. And perhaps the time will come when, if I can look back upon my present thoughts, I may find the most elevated of them as unworthy of their object as I now think the old man in the elbow chair.

2. We now conceive of God as a Spirit, without mixture of any thing material to serve him either for organ or instrument: but then we take our notion of Spirit from those among whom we are conversant, that is, from one another; whom we find acting to accomplish something expedient, or to gratify some desire, directed by the notices of their judgment or senses, and characterized by their

sentiments and affections: so we apprehend him attentive to the contingencies of chance and free-will, receiving information from his all-discerning eye, proceeding upon the judgments of perfect reason, actuated by those we style the noble affections, concerned for the well-being of his race of men, solicitous to compass his gracious purposes, and to receive the tribute of their willing obedience. Still the lineaments of our image are fetched from human nature, and so they must always be: for we have no colours to employ, nor archetypes to copy, but what were handed to us from experience. And though by the careful exercise of our understanding, we may improve gradually in the fineness of our strokes, yet we cannot retain the delicatest of them in our imagination; which will discern only the grosser parts and see the colours changeable.

Therefore we are forced to discourse and think of God as earnest and anxious, delighted or grieved, angry, compassionate, jealous, or favourable, honoured, served, hurt, or resisted, by our manner of behaviour: apprehending him sometimes an indulgent parent who will not mark what is amiss, at others an unrelenting judge who will call to judgment every idle word; confining our eye to the amiable or terrible part of his character

according

according as we happen to be in the humour, or as things fall out round about us. This necessity of ascribing our own affections and sentiments to God, and the variable quality of our ideas, operating insensibly to ourselves, will introduce those of the unworthy sort, and make us attribute the imperfections, the frailties, or even the foulness of created spirits to him, before we are aware: so as to work sometimes a lasting delusion, but oftener a temporary disquietude and misapprehension in our minds.

3. This mischief cannot be totally escaped, for those who pretend to the highest perfection complain of their obscurities, their aridities, their despondencies, their desertions, and all mankind besides can see their delusions and their wildness both of thought and conduct; nor are the most soberly judicious without their lamentations at being unable to preserve constantly the same equal tenor of mind: nevertheless, it may be lessened and in great measure remedied by diligence and good management. For we have seen before, in our examination of human nature, that reason has some power to give a tincture of her own colours to the inferior faculties; and by her continual though gentle efforts, to work an alteration in the habits and trains of thinking. This then is the service we may

expect to draw from our esoterics: first to contemplate the divine essence, the dispositions of providence and courses of nature as well external as internal, from thence to gather the reasonable expectation of the events, and natural consequences of actions in particular situations of circumstances we are likely to come into: and then secondly to consider what affections apprehended in the Disposer of all things would produce the same effect.

Thus if the philosoper sees that provision is made for all events within the plan of providence by a complicated multitude of causes, most of them undiscernible by us, and taking a contrary turn to what we should expect; he will represent God as watchful over contingencies, to rectify their errors, and guide them continually by his secret influence into their proper channels. If he discovers that the same good or evil will naturally follow upon certain actions as would be distributed by man according as gratified or angry; he will inculcate the opinions of those affections in the Deity. If he knows that unbecoming notions of God must introduce disquietude, disorder, and unhappiness among mankind; he will describe him as extremely jealous of his glory. If he observes that ample provision is made for the wants, conveniencies, and enjoyments

ments of the creatures; he will paint him as a kind and indulgent parent. If he finds reason to believe that every evil terminates in greater good; he will delineate him compassionate and tender, remembering mercy in judgment, correcting for our benefit. If he perceives the laws of nature stedfast, not to be broken through; he figures him a resolute governor and inflexible judge. If he experiences our industry and spirits rise in proportion as we can fancy ourselves of importance to the person upon whose account we exert them; he tries to work a persuasion of God being desirous of our services, delighted with our gratitude, solicitous for our well-being, earnest to have us conduct ourselves wisely, disappointed at our deserting him, grieved at our disrespect, troubled to see us run into mischief, and anxious to prevent our misconduct. And so of the rest: employing the springs of imagination to effect that very temper of mind and tenor of conduct, which the most refined reason and extensive understanding would recommend, upon the contemplation of nature, expedience and rectitude.

4. Therefore he neither prevaricates with others nor practises double dealing himself, by using one set of doctrines for the closet, and another for the world. For both contain

the

the same matter and conduce to the same point: the latter being no more than a version from the long-winded, uniform, correct, refined language of philosophy, into the concise, loose, figurative, fluctuating manner of expression, fit for common discourse. It has been shewn upon several occasions before, that reason has not the immediate command of our active powers, which are conducted by affections and desires whose views, being short and confined, turn from time to time upon certain marks of pursuit hanging just before them, and we, being so constantly habituated to this state of mind in ourselves, cannot ordinarily comprehend otherwise even of God himself. Wherefore we are excusable in practising this manner of comprehension, provided we render it as refined and celestial as our imagination will bear, striving to exclude all impurities or gross commixtures that can possibly be spared without leaving the idea too thin to be sensible. And this possibility is relative to times and persons: for when bodily disorders obscure our faculties, when the hurry of business leaves no room for reflection, if our talents be small, our education low, our profession or converse confining us to vulgar objects, we shall not be able to raise them above gross and sensible ideas. Therefore that conception is pure and

clean

clean to every man, which is the purest and cleanest he can entertain.

For my part, when I reflect that it is possible I may outlive my own understanding, as they say Sir Isaac Newton did, to whom his own theorems became unintelligible mysteries, or be debilitated in my faculties by some paralytic disorder; I cannot expect to have the benefit of what little refinements I have made shift to spin out in the foregoing sheets: therefore am desirous of laying up a stock of such sentiments, as I can then retain to be my comfort in my second childhood. And when I consider how many people are occupied in the lowest offices of life, who with the care and opportunities afforded me, might perhaps have run greater lengths than I can pretend to: I cannot content myself with framing speculations for the amusement of such only as were brought up at the university, without thinking of the peasant, the labourer, and the cookmaid.

Yet the imagination may be made susceptible of pure ideas gradually, but it cannot be done hastily nor by violence, nor pouring more at once into the vessel than it will take: so the business is to observe every little step that may be made in the approach towards the state whereinto we would bring it. If men of thought would take care to

agree

agree a little better among themselves, they would find much might be done upon the vulgar by general consent and example. Of which we have sufficient experience in the difference between the present world and the ancient: for they could not do without images, sacrifices, numerous rites and corporeal ingredients in their idea of the Deity, which are now wholly banished from the lowest of our people.

5. Yet are we still liable unthinkingly to fall into little artifices for working upon the divine affections, as we work upon one another. The child finds it can prevail upon its mother's fondness by fretfulness and complaining: so we murmer and grumble against providence, and fret when things fall out contrary to our liking. We can sometimes influence our fellow-creatures by our estimation of their conduct, and shame them out of their inobservance of us by taking it in dudgeon: so we arraign the justice of God, pass our censure upon his proceedings, and take it amiss that less righteous and less deserving people are better dealt with than ourselves: on the other hand, we may win upon one another by expressions of our good opinion and readiness to oblige: so we expect to raise a foudness in God by our oblations, our assiduities, our uncommon zeal in his

his service, and flattering him in our thoughts, persuading ourselves that we see a rectitude and wisdom in dispensations where we really do not.

This timorousness of offending the divine delicacy, as I may call it, has proved a main obstacle against true freedom of thought, and improvement as well in science as belief. For because our friends may be disgusted with us for an unseasonable sincerity, and soothed by politeness and complaisance: therefore we dare not examine our own thoughts impartially, for fear, God should see them at the same time, and take distaste at them. But if we have any latent scruple or infidelity within us, it is in vain to dissemble with the Searcher of hearts, and highly expedient for ourselves that we should know it: for unless the distemper be discovered, there is no applying remedies for the cure of it.

Nevertheless, a man may sometimes be brought into an opinion by persuading himself that he has it, or got rid of a misapprehension by forbearing to contemplate it; and the state of our bodily humours, or unfavourable circumstances, will now and then raise a temporary notion that is not our settled opinion: in which cases there is no better way than to banish what disturbs us from our reflection, or reserve it for a more favourable

vourable season of calmer and clearer judgment: for there are some sores that may be made to heal themselves only by keeping them covered from the air. So that there is a discretion to be observed upon this article, as well as all others relating to the purity of our ideas: something gross and human we must mingle in our conceptions of God, because it is unavoidable, and more we must not mingle than is unavoidable.

Therefore it is a very nice point to distinguish exactly what is necessary to give a solid body to our Religion, that it may not evaporate, yet without retaining a single particle more of *caput mortuum* than requisite to fix the spirit: as likewise to discern what is necessary for other people, though mischievous and improper for ourselves. Herein lies the great difficulty in modeling the popular or exoteric doctrines, so that while all agree in outward form or profession, each may hold them in the utmost degree of purity whereof he is respectively capable. And this being a matter of equal importance and nicety, it becomes us daily to purify our conceptions, and enlarge them so far as they can bear: for in so doing we shall purify our conduct, and secure a steady, unruffled serenity of mind.

6. But there is still another branch of purity,

purity, which consists in separating our idea of God from all external objects of nastiness and impurity: and here the exoteric doctrine runs directly contrary to the esoteric. For the latter describes him omnipresent and omniscient, filling the whole immensity of space, beholding all his works and their works without exception: alike present in the kitchen as in the chapel, at the hog-sty as at the sacred altar; observing us in our follies as well as our serious employments; alike attentive to us in our necessary uncleannesses as in our fervent devotions. I should here, according to my ordinary method, particularize in some striking instances, where we could not reasonably exclude the divine presence, nor observance: but I refrain, lest, while I labour to convince the understanding, I might shock the imagination. But whoever will cast a momentary glance upon what his own reflection may suggest, will instantly feel how inexpedient it is to entertain conceptions of every thing we know to be true, and how necessary to provide one system for the closet, and another for our familiar use.

For we are not to conceit ourselves that we carry the real essences even of common things in our minds, much less of the most excellent and glorious of all Beings: we apprehend them only in types and colours drawn out upon

upon our sensory.—It has been observed before that the God we worship is no more than an idol framed out of human materials, picked up from our own composition. Therefore though the divine Essence be more than Ithuriel's spear, incapable of defilement by any ordures, however surrounded or intimately penetrated by it, and being nauseated or any ways affected by any objects however disgustful or loathsome: yet the idea in our imagination may be polluted by filthiness clinging to it. Such then being the case, and it having pleased God to subject us to some base employments and offensive objects we cannot avoid: it behoves us to lay aside every idea of that sort when we think of him. Which shews the extravagance of those enthusiasts, who exhort us literally to have God always in our thoughts, and do every action of our lives with intention to please him: because this must continually draw us into gross offences against his purity. For if every time we shifted or washed our hands, or cut our corns, or did other things I do not care to name, we were to do them with direct intention to please him; it would be more likely to debase and contaminate than ennoble and sanctify our minds, to degrade him below ourselves, than raise us to a nearer resemblance with him.

7. And

7. And as the grossness of our imaginations obliges us to exclude our idea of God from certain places unsuitable for his reception: so the narrowness of them compels us to confine him to some particular place of residence. For omnipresence is by much too large an idea for our comprehensions to grasp; we cannot conceive an immensity of space, much less the thought of one uncompounded individual Being; existent throughout the whole capaciousness of space. For we take our notions of magnitude from body which occupies a larger or smaller room, in proportion to the quantity of matter, or number of parts contained in it, or the distance whereto they are stretched from one another: and with respect to the presence of perceptive Beings we distinguish between that and the place of their existence; for while standing in one spot, we apprehend every thing done in our presence that passes within a compass wherein we can discern it distinctly. Our imagination being habituated to this manner of conception by the objects wherewith we are continually conversant, we cannot cast it into any other form when we contemplate the supreme Being; to whom therefore we assign a peculiar habitation, yet extending his presence beyond the place of his existence.

But because we ourselves cannot be present

sent in one place without being absent from others, and become familiarised to things appearing continually in our presence, it would vilify, and, I may say, vulgarise the Almighty, to imagine him resident among ourselves, and what must follow of course in our thoughts engaged among the trifling scenes that occupy our notice. Therefore we say God is in heaven and we upon earth, that he dwells in the heaven of heavens, in the centre, of inaccessible light. Now it is no matter where we suppose this heaven to be, whether above the clouds, or in the ether, or supercelestial regions, it were better not to examine the point too minutely, but leave every one at liberty to place it where he finds most convenient to his own imagination; only taking care to fix it in some spot from whence the ever-wakeful eye of Providence may behold distinctly all the concerns of the earth, the courses of nature, the workings of fortune, the secret chambers of darkness, and inmost recesses of the human heart.

8. This limited imagination of the Deity renders him capable of loco-motion (an article that can never find admittance in the esoteric creed: so that he can go forth to plan out the spaces for a new world, to lay the foundations of the stedfast mountains, to set bounds to the restless ocean, to clothe the ground

ground with all the variety of vegetables, to give command to his elements and seasons by the word of his mouth, and to survey his works with complacence, beholding them very good. Nor will it be incongruous to represent him descending upon great occasions to interfere in the administration of affairs below: riding in whirlwinds, upheaving redundant seas, shaking the solid ground with earthquakes, rending the heavens with tremendous thunders, turning the scale of victory, rescuing nations from destruction, giving the turn to critical events, determining the fall of kingdoms. For there cannot be an operation without an immediate presence of the agent, nor can our narrow minds conceive him present in an unusual place without a removal from his ordinary residence: but our thoughts are too busied in seasons of extraordinary events to reflect that a presence in one place implies an absence from elsewhere.

And it will be expedient for the like reason to apprehend him peculiarly present at some certain times and places, when we withdraw from our usual scenes and occupations; for then it will rather raise than sully our imaginations: but of this I may have occasion to treat more particularly in some succeeding chapter. If any one shall find

these

these images too gross for his use, he will do right to refuse them admittance: but as the best of us have something vulgar in our composition, we may employ some popular ideas without hurt to the purity of our refined theory; and we shall reap this advantage from bringing ourselves acquainted with the management of them, that we shall be better able to help our neighbours by preventing them from falling into a grossness they can avoid. And an open-hearted, truly benevolent man will strive to think as well as act, not for himself alone, but for the benefit of as many as he can do service to either way.

CHAP. IV.

MAJESTY.

THE very notion of a self-existent Being, the Creator and Governor of all things, carries in it an idea of greatness and pre-eminence beyond comparison. For the existence, the powers and privileges of all other substances being derived originally from him, whatever they possess must have been contained in the fountain from whence they derived, which could not give better things

things than it had to bestow. So that all we see great, or noble, or admirable, or excellent among the creatures, resides collectively in the Author of their natures. And as our knowledge stands confined within a very small part of his works, we see nothing of those excellencies and subjects of admiration which lie beyond our notice. Nor, could we survey the whole stupendous fabric compleatly, have we reason to believe but that there are greater riches of power and glory than stand exemplified in any district of the universe: for we have found in the former part of our progress, that the business of creation requires other Attributes than those hitherto known to the Sons of Adam.

The same notion too, besides intrinsic greatness and excellence, implies uncontrolable Authority and absolute Dominion: for the creature subsisting at first by the will of their Creator, how stable a constitution soever they may have received, can subsist no longer, than that Will shall permit. He that gave can take away, and what originally created, can station, compound, alter or dispose as seemeth good: there being nothing more powerful to limit, nor superior to lay an obligation upon him. These points are too evident to be much enlarged upon, for it is the difficulties and obscurities in a subject that give

scope to argument and illustration. And they are too luminous and magnificent to be contemplated by us, for a redundance of light is as unfit for our optics as a defect of it; nor can we discern any thing distinctly of very large objects until removed to a distance that may contract them within the circle of our vision.

Therefore as we see the sun better through a smoaked glass or in a pail of water than by looking at him directly, so we can more easily discern the power and glory of God, through the veil of second causes, or by reflection in his works, or in the ministry of inferior powers executing his commands, than by contemplating him in his essence or immediate operations: for which reason he is often repesented as acting by his subordinate ministers, sending his destroying or protecting Angel to spread desolation, pestilence, and famine, or to guard the righteous from danger, and guide his steps that he hurt not his foot against a stone.

2. But all this relates only to his almighty power and the essential perfection of his nature but will not conduct us to his Attribute of Majesty: which is one of the moral Attributes, whereby we suppose him withholden from works and objects unbecoming the dignity of his character. And here again our exoterics

exoterics will run directly opposite to our esoterics: for our reason, when stretching her eye to the utmost verge of contemplation, represents him omnipresent, intelligent, and powerful, in every mathematical point, throughout the whole immensity of space. That nothing, not the minutest object, escapes his notice, nor the most trifling incident eludes his care. That all things being the work of his hands, are good, and of importance in the stations wherein he has respectively placed them, therefore none are unbecoming his attention. That he orders, disposes, and provides for them all, their situations, assortments, motions, and operations without exception: for no multiplicity of business can distract him, but he has vigour and understanding to spare for the most insignificant, without descending from his dignity, or intermitting the most glorious of his works.

But this is by much too large a field to be drawn upon any scale in our imagination; if we reflect ever so little upon the diversity of characters, humours, and interests among mankind, the various instincts, natures, and properties of animals, the infinite multitude of diversly qualified particles floating about in air, earth, and ocean; the number, intricacy, and imperceptible influence of causes

affecting almost every event befalling us; we shall quickly bewilder ourselves, and find it beyond all conception to apprehend all these reduced under a regular direction and comprised in one uniform plan. Therefore it were in vain to attempt it, and we had best take our exoteric idea from some archetype we can find in ourselves more familiar to our experience.

3. Now we find our capacities circumscribed within a certain compass, straitened in our knowledge and limited in our powers; we have a sphere of action extending but little way beyond ourselves, changing as we move, so that if we go to employ our activity upon things at a distance, we lose the reach of those we left behind: and though our sphere may contain many subjects, we cannot act upon them all, but only have our option to exert ourselves upon one, or a few among the rest; nor can we do our business effectually without applying our whole attention to the present thing we take in hand. We likewise receive assistance in our operations from habit and practice, which give an ease and inclination to the courses whereto we have been familiarized, and render us awkward and unable to make a progress in those from which they have kept us strangers.

Hence it becomes necessary to make a

selection

selection among the objects before us, and our abilities being scanty, to lay them out where they may turn to the greatest profit. And as we have motives of honour as well as advantage to influence us, it is unbecoming to employ ourselves in mean and trivial matters, in preference to the more valuable and excellent. Yet is this excellence in some cases relative, for though there be many ways of spending time which are below any reasonable creature to take; there are works necessary and convenient in life, which therefore cannot be base, and unbecoming in themselves, it being the Duty of some to undergo them, yet are unworthy the attention of others who are called to higher services. For we are placed in different stations upon earth, we have different employments to follow, different habits and inclinations to encourage for forwarding us in the performance of them. Therefore it would be a demeaning himself for a person in high station to bestow his thoughts and industry upon matters belonging to those of lower degree: because he could not do this without omitting the functions incumbent upon him to fulfil, and contracting tastes unsuitable to his character.

And that this is what makes such condescension a debasement of dignity, may appear from hence: because where a man can

concern

concern himself with trifles at intervals, and converse among the vulgar upon particular occasions without taking off his thoughts from higher matters, without interfering with the proper functions of his station, or interrupting his intercourse among his equals, it is never deemed to fix a speck of blemish upon his character; more especially were necessary for his health or recreation of spirits, or conducive to some important use. Tully tells us that Scipio and Lælius, the two greatest men of the greatest nation upon earth, used in their country retirements, to busy themselves in picking cockle shells and pebbles upon the shore, and stoop to all kinds of innocent puerilities; nor are affability and condescension esteemed less than ornaments to a nobleman.

The Czar Peter the Great is said to have served as a common Sailor in the Dutch Navy, and worked with a hatchet among the carpenters in our dock-yards; but then he had in view the improvement of his own marine by perfecting himself in all the branches of it: so these vile occupations did not take off his thoughts from the proper functions of his imperial office, nor did they weaken but rather tend to establish his title of Great. The subaltern, when raised by degrees to a commander in chief, must lay aside those offices

it was his praise to be punctual in executing before; such as visiting the quarters, inspecting the firelocks, hearing complaints, and preventing quarrels among the private men: because he has other business to take care of, not more important in itself, for, unless things be rightly ordered among the private men, the army will be capable of but little service, but more important for him to regard. For this reason it is beneath persons in extensive trusts to concern themselves with minute matters: it is their part to confine their attention to general regulations, as being enough to take up the whole of it: nor can they execute otherwise than by the ministry of inferiors, without descending from their point of eminence, from whence they may direct and oversee much greater works than they could compleat by their own industry.

But a ruler, to execute by his inferiors must have their due submission and ready obedience, which depend in great measure upon the sentiments they entertain of his person; for men are but sensitivo-rational animals, actuated for the most part by sense and imagination, which alone give us a readiness in our performances: nor will duty, advantage, or fear of punishment, answer compleatly without a reverential esteem and admiration.

admiration. But imagination is guided by appearances, which consequently deserve his attention: therefore he will keep a state, go surrounded with attendants, affect a ceremony and solemnity, assume a grandeur of deportment and expression suitable to his rank, so far but no farther than needful to impress the requisite degree of respect upon the populace; and he will disdain every little action or gesture that might degrade or make him cheap in their estimation.

4. This then being the constant course of experience in human affairs, wherein there is an allotment of offices and occupations; those destined to the highest, looking upon it as a degradation to meddle in the inferior, marked out from among the multitude by external distinctions of equipage, ceremony, magnificence, dress, and demeanour: and the works of industry being carried on by numbers, using powers and capacities of their own under the direction of one who contributes nothing more than his direction: our imagination falls so strongly into that train, that we can never get it to run in any other, without an immediate force and violence put upon it by the utmost stretch of our understanding, which we no sooner take off than it constantly recoils again.

Therefore when we let our thoughts roam upon

upon external nature, an idea of the like polity immediately occurs: we conceive the elements, the seeds of vegetables, the salts, the acids, the spirit contained in them, to have an activity of their own; we imagine chance an operating power producing events, and free-will taking a direction for which there were no causes existent before their operation; we presume general laws provided for the maintenance of order, and regulating the Sum of Affairs without descending to minute cases, too numerous to be comprised in any code; we suppose God, the King of nature, seated upon his imperial throne, somewhere above the fogs and vapours of this loathsome earth, environed with ineffable glory, surrounded by hosts of Angels, Archangels, Seraphs, Cherubs, Principalities and powers awaiting his command, by whose ministry he has the disposal of second causes at a distance, or by an inexpressible energy communicated thereto in a manner there is no occasion for us to examine too strictly.

In this way we apprehend him continually making fresh provision for correcting the errors of chance and disorders of free-will, governing like an earthly monarch by new edicts and new application of his power, executed by ministers he employs. If we allow him to regard particular events, this is only

only upon extraordinary occasions, when they draw consequences of great importance after them: such as the fate of empires, the success of battles, the salvation of a soul, or preservation of a human life. This being the constant strain of our discourses shews that we cannot easily cast our thoughts into any other form: and as men continually speak of the divine operations in figurative expressions, they must of course apprehend them bearing a similitude with the figures they employ. For as in reading a romance or a poem, we take a temporary persuasion of their being real facts, and of our conversing among the persons and scenes they represent: so the perpetual use of allegory will assimilate the mind to the train of conceptions it conveys.

5. Now since our imagination is so habituated to conceptions of this kind, that it becomes impracticable to impress others of an opposite cast, so as to carry them about with us for our ordinary use; we must model our common system of providence accordingly, complying with necessity, and humouring the imperfection of our nature which we cannot mend. And as we can never totally get rid of chance and trifle in our thoughts, but many things seem to pass around us merely casual and utterly insignificant, such will necessarily appear themselves, and ren-

der

der the agents concerned in them, contemptible in our eyes. On the other hand, the capacity and management of great affairs give us an idea of dignity, which rises in proportion to the importance of employments occupying an Agent or pre-eminence above other powers subordinate; and is hurt by the juction of any thing mean, or trivial.

Since then it is of the utmost consequence, as well to the right condition of our minds as the regularity of our conduct, to entertain an awful and reverential notion of the Almighty, as having power to dispose of all events, and supreme Governor over all creatures: it behoves us to ascribe to him an Attribute of Majesty, to conceive him jealous of his glory, expecting our obedience and adoration; to remove every trifling event and mean object from our thoughts when we have him in them; and to raise our idea of him, by such images as are suitable to the highest degree, that the weakness and grossness of our faculties will admit. For as we observed before under the article of Purity, though the essence of God be incapable of actual defilement by any filthiness co-existent in the same place with it, yet the idea of him in our hearts may be polluted and rusted over by impurities adhering thereto: so although his omnipresent power cannot be degraded nor his attention engrossed by

any

any operation, but that he may govern events seemingly the most insignificant without descending from his government of worlds and hierarchies, yet the same idea may be degraded by joining it with such minute employments; for that is far from being omnipresent, though the original it was designed to represent be so. For our attention being confined to the spot we think on, we cannot apprehend him attentive to trifles without taking off his eye from what appears to us, the proper functions of his divine Majesty.

Nevertheless, we may safely apprehend him interposing upon extraordinary occasions, for so we see our princes and great men do without lessening their dignity: or taking care of our particular concerns, for we are always of vast importance to ourselves; and what concerns us nearly engaging the mind deeply, serves rather to elevate than depress our idea of the cause operating towards it.

6. Thus in opinions relative to the Attribute of Majesty it is more requisite to regulate them by our own nature than the divine, and carefully avoid whatever might appear injurious to it in our own apprehension, however agreeable to our esoteric reasonings. Therefore here, as before in treating of Purity, we shall often find it expedient to conceive of things otherwise than we know them to be. And we practise the like reserve with

respect

respect to those whom we esteem upon earth; we know the greatest men must change their linen, wash their hands, pare their nails, and stoop to other base offices reckoned shameful in nature: yet to dwell upon these thoughts would lessen our reverence of their persons. So we have seen in our Chapter of Providence how the greatest events are liable to be influenced by the smallest, so that the accomplishment of them cannot be secured, if the little particles of earth, air, and vapour, the instincts of animals, or fancies of human creatures, be suffered to run at random.

A grain of dust falling in a man's eye while fighting, may prove his destruction: a few particles of rust upon a firelock, or of damp in the pan, may save a life: a wasp missing his hold in crawling up the sides of a pot, may fall in to be drank by one, whom he shall sting to death: a young lady by a lucky assortment of her Ribands, may procure entrance into a family where she shall become the mother of heroes; yet we cannot without impiety imagine God following the single atoms of terrene or aqueous matter as they float about in the air, watching his opportunity to trip up the feet of a crawling insect or attending a giddy girl when she adjusts her dress at the toilet. We know, both from reason and authority, that of two sparrows

rows that are sold for a farthing, not one falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father, and the hairs of our head are all numbered: yet what pious man, if upon combing his head he meets with a tangle that tears off two or three hairs, or if the cat should happen to catch his favourite sparrow, would ascribe these catastrophes to the hand of Providence? Who would not be shocked at the profaneness of one, who, upon finding only the tail of a mouse in his trap, or upon losing a flea that he had hunted after, should say, it was the Will of God they should escape?

7. It is possible indeed by frequently comparing our esoteric ideas with the exoteric, and observing how they tend ultimately to the same point, so to familiarize them to our imagination, as that we may entertain them without abating of the reverence we ought always to preserve. This I may testify upon my own experience, having by practice brought several speculations to lie easy and inoffensive in my thoughts, which would have appeared uncouth, disturbing, and perplexing to them formerly, and may still do so to other people. But this must be an effect of time and careful digestion: for imagination works by habitual associations and trains, which when running in very different courses must have many channels of communication worked

worked between to make them coincide. In the prosecution of this attempt, great vigilance must be used not to admit any thing derogatory to our idea of the divine Majesty, which we must endeavour to keep steady, solid, and connected in all its parts: and I believe, when doubts and perplexities do arise, it is owing to the fluctuation of our ideas, insinuating some speck of human passion or imbecility thereinto, unawares.

After the imagination has been thus gradually cast into a new arrangement, it will become as averse to some of the old ideas, as it was at first to the present: finding the divine Majesty debased by that partiality and, favour, that indignation and abhorrence, that peremptoriness of command, earnest expectation of worship, alteration of measures upon occurrencies happening, judgment of characters upon observation of their conduct; which are so necessary for raising it with the generality. For they see the best and greatest of men preferring their friends and favourites, indignant at affronts, destesting villainies, commanding merely to exercise their authority, pleased with homage, varying their schemes according to circumstances, taking their estimation of persons from their outward behaviour: nor do they discern that all this springs from the imperfection of

human

human nature; so that in their apprehension it may well join with the idea of incomparable excellence. Thus the imaginations of mankind being differently modeled, and that in great variety of forms, regard must be had not only to the general turn, but to particular characters, so as to improve the idea of Majesty in each, by such way as may prove most effectual.

But an excess of colouring may be as hurtful as a defect: when the strokes are laid on too thick they obscure, rather than illuminate the figure. By conceiving our continual Services agreeable to God, as his rightful due, we raise our idea of him: but by representing them as giving him a real pleasure, we make ourselves of importance to him, and consequently degrade him in our thoughts. By requiring an unreserved obedience to his commands without knowing their expedience, we acknowledge his sovereign authority: but by supposing they have none other foundation than his arbitrary Will, we depreciate the grandeur of his wisdom and bounty. And in many other duties it is a very nice point to distinguish how they may be stretched to the utmost without being overstrained: for an extension beyond this point would unavoidably beget narrowness, instead of an enlargement of Mind. This

then

then being an important as well as delicate point, it behoves all who have the guidance and instruction of others, to be cautious of urging their topics too strongly; lest by an indiscreet zeal they leave things in worse condition that they found them, and teach men to place the glory of God in matters that would cast a discredit upon the character of an earthly creature.

8. Such indiscretion abounds to profusion among enthusiasts, who would have us keep up a glowing admiration of the divine excellencies at our work, in our play, during our meals, and for many hours of tedious devotion. But they do not consider that admiration is an extraordinary stretch of the mind, which it cannot exert at all times, nor keep up beyond a certain period, when the spirits will be exhausted, the mental eye grow languid, and if still persisting to hold an object however luminous in contemplation, will see it obscure, unstriking, and no better than common objects. Accordingly we hear them complain of frequent coolness, aridities, and desertions; wherein they do no great honour to God in ascribing the natural defects of human weakness to a kind of turn of humour in him, who one hour shews them extraordinary favours above all mankind, and the next deserts them without any reason.

Neither would it avail for our purpose, were it pacticable to retain God in our thoughts through all our little Occupations, and do every thing for this service; were a man to change his coat, tie up his garters, or gather a nosegay in his garden, always to please God, it would diminish more than add to the reverence of his name. For by perpetually mingling terms of Religion among our common ideas and discourses, we shall empty them of all their solemnity, and reduce them to meer Cant, a word derived from Latin of singing, when people usually attend to the music without heeding the sense. And that your over-righteous people have served them so, appears from their introducing them by head and shoulders upon occasions, whereto they cannot be applicable. This humour prevailing generally among our forefathers in the times of both civil and religious anarchy, begot the contrary extreme, as it is called, of profane swearing, and burlesquing every thing serious: though it seems to me a similar offspring, like the viper's brood, destroying its parent, only that it might have the doing of the same mischief itself, being the like expedient for evaporating all idea from the most significant words in our language.

But the divine Majesty, when righty apprehended,

prehended, undebased with allaying mixtures, being the idea which contributes most effectually to ennoble our thoughts, to keep our conduct steady, and strengthen our dependance under unfavourable circumstances, deserves our best care and judgment to improve it. Which is properest done at those seasons when our thoughts are fresh, our minds most vigorous, and our understandings clearest, when contemplation is ready to flow spontaneously: by frequent efforts at such times we may fix a deep impression, not to start up incessantly, but upon occasion. For as a Man who has a steady loyalty to his prince, though he does not think of him every moment yet will instantly fire upon hearing any thing spoken disrespectfully against him: so he that possesses an habitual reverence of the divine Majesty, though it may not operate directly upon every minute action of his life, yet whatever injurious thereto offers to his thoughts, will immediately give him an alarm.

CHAP. V.

HOLINESS.

HOLINESS, in its greatest latitude, implies an exemption from all tastes, desires, and trains of thought, excited in us by our coporeal appetites or the allurement of sensible objects. Now this exemption in ourselves can be no more than temporary: for our situation here upon earth renders it necessary and our duty to have continual intercourse among the things external round about us, and the constitution of our nature obliges us to attend to the calls of Bodily appetite. While busied in these occupations, our conduct is not holy, neither is it yet profane, but in a middle state of indifference between both; but we are not so tied down to external objects or the imaginations springing from thence, but that we may sometimes separate every thing of that kind from our thoughts, in order to contemplate the constitution of universal nature and character of its Author, to consider ourselves as citizens of the world, inheritors of a country where nothing terrene or carnal finds place.

Now it is this separation from ordinary conjunctions that constitutes the idea of holiness:

holiness: for places are holy when separated from all common uses, and reserved for our reception, when we assemble to raise our minds above sublunary scenes. Rites, ceremonies, and institutions are holy, when contrived to turn imagination out of her familiar courses, and introduce a solemnity suitable for religious purposes. Holy vestments and utensils are those employed only in sacred offices. Holy days are those set apart for the attendance upon our spiritual concerns. And men are called holy and divine, who make it their profession to study and practise the methods of leading their fellow-creatures into just notions of their Maker, and of their duties as well towards him, as themselves, and their neighbours.

Thus holiness bears a near affinity with the subjects handled in the two last Chapters: as not consisting with a mixture of any thing foul or unbecoming, mean or trivial. But some things are relatively so according to times and circumstances: for many thoughts and actions would defile and debase the mind in seasons of devotion, that may be innocent and commendable at other seasons. These things indulged too much, or improperly, obscure and stupify the faculties, but do not pervert them; they clog the mind, but do not clip its wings: as some other practices

59735

practices do, which therefore are denominated wicked, as rendering it incapable of rising to a holy disposition, at any season.

2. Therefore holiness in a more restrained sense stands opposed to moral impurity, which taints and fixes a lasting blemish upon the mind: when vice becomes a part of the character, and is adopted for a principal of action. For as in the Body there is a difference between mere weakness and disease; the one may subject to some inconveniencies, but does not vitiate the blood and juices, nor corrupt the solids, nor contain what is putrid and noisome, like the other. So in the mental system, infirmity is not the same with disorder; the one can affect only the outward actions, whereas the other seizes upon the will; the one misleads and surprizes, while the other depraves. The best men have their weak and unguarded hours, wherein they act unwarrantably through the prevalence of their desires, which are all of the natural kind, and become faulty only by their excess: though during these intervals, they depart from their holiness, yet as soon as the impulse is over, their former tenor and disposition returns again, so they do not lose their character of holy, any more than a man loses his character of a musician, by having his instrument witholden from him for a while.

But

But there are other desires, malignant and vicious, not springing from nature, but generated by evil habits and perverse management, never innocent, because corrupt in kind, rather than excessive in degree: such as envy, rancour, malice, injustice, cruelty, pride, rapaciousness, sordid selfishness, and the like. To which we may add, such excess of the natural desires as have gotten so strong hold of the heart as to be cherished there with conscious complacence, even when their proper objects do not solicit; as sensuality, debauchery, unlawful gallantries, fondness of pleasure, and idleness.

All these being become habituated to the mind, strike so strong root there, as to change and deprave it in character, rendering it incapable of taking a holy disposition, because perpetually casting up ideas incompatible therewith. For this reason it is incumbent upon us to stand always upon the watch, to prevent our infirmities from becoming diseases, our necessary desires from growing excessive, and gaining an habitual fondness, our passions, ill treatment from others, cross accidents, unequal distributions of Providence, custom, example, or company, from drawing us insensibly into desires unnatural, and essentially evil.

3. But when we cast up our eyes to the Supreme

Supreme Being, we shall see at first glance there is no occasion for an Attribute of holiness, to keep him watchful against mischiefs that cannot befal him. For he has no wants which might require appetites urging to supply them, no natural desires that might rise to excess, and become habitual, no passions to beguile, errors to mislead, influence of custom or company to pervert him: he cannot grudge the blessings himself has bestowed, repine at the dispensations he has made, become soured by accidents which are none to him, grow proud at excelling the works of his hands, nor harbour malice for injuries that cannot hurt him. Therefore holiness in him is no more than a negation of those moral impurities, whereto our nature lies liable: and I believe there is nobody who will not readily acknowledge, that every thing of this kind ought to be excluded from our idea of God.

Nevertheless, as I observed before, we take our lineaments of the sublimest objects from archetypes found within ourselves; and vice has such a bewitching art of disguising, as to make us mistake her for virtue and holiness; so that without careful attention, she will palm her own odious features upon us for excellencies, and draw us insensibly to give them a place in that which ought to be all perfection,

perfection. Thus we find the heathen world in general ascribed sensuality, debauchery, competition, pride, envy, jealousy, inveteracy, injustice, animosity, cruelty, and other moral impurities, to their heavenly powers, whom yet they supposed elevated above the reach of human imperfection: nor did they perceive any inconsistency herein, because they regarded those dispositions as no blemish nor mark of unholiness in the moral character.

Mankind is now happily altered for the better in this respect; the least enlightened among us acknowledge the unity and spirituality of the Godhead. So there is no room for sensuality, where there are no corporeal members to be employed as instruments therein: no place for inordinate excesses of desire, where there is neither Nectar, nor Ambrosia, nor other necessary allurement to excite a natural appetite: no competition, envy, nor jealousy in a single substance, who has none other to contend with, to rival, or to suspect: no pride without an object to be set in comparison: no rancour or animosity where there is nothing to resist the Will: no injustice in him who could not be profited thereby: no hatred in one whom an enemy cannot hurt nor obstruct: no abhorrence or detestation of things which were the work of his own hand.

This

This is now so clearly understood by every body, that we never knowingly admit any mixture of moral foulness or human weakness into our idea of the Divine character. Yet whoever will observe the discourses and apprehensions of the men and women he commonly meets with, may observe some of those blemishes have crept in imperceptibly, and that by means of notions which were innocent and necessary at first, but have corrupted and perished by passing through our hands. Nor is the mischief unfrequently increased by the indiscretion of some zealous teachers, who being not sufficiently guarded in their thoughts at all points, pursue a favorite notion to extravagant lengths, until they run it down into abjectness and absurdity.

4. It is proper that virtue should be represented as agreeable in the eyes of God, and whatever is done in support of his honour and religion, in relief of his servants, or for the discouragement of wickedness, as done for his service; because this tends to urge and hearten us in the prosecution of our duty: but it is carrying the matter too far when we make ourselves of importance to him, or fancy we can steal away his affections from our fellow-creatures, do him a real service, or strengthen his hands to overcome his enemies.

It is expedient we should look upon things seemingly indifferent in themselves as obligatory when enjoined by him, for we are not to dispute his commands because we do not discern the reasonableness of them; but to imagine him giving arbitrary commands which have no foundation whatever in reason, or to be delighted with unavailing expressions of homage tending to no benefit either of our own or our fellow-creatures, introduces a littleness and unworthiness into our idea of him.

While we endeavour to raise our minds to the highest sense of his power, his goodness, and his glory they can attain, we do well; but when we strive to disguise our real thoughts, for fear of offending him, or use fallacious arguments in support of his honour, we shall fall into an apprehension of him as being ceremonious and captious, liable to be imposed upon by flattery, and taken with compliment.

In apprehending the actions and concerns of men to lie under the continual inspection and conduct of his Providence, we do no more than is agreeable to sound reason and truth; but if we suppose the eye of Providence engrossed by particular persons in disregard of the common herd, and anxiously attentive to their minute occasions, so far as

to

to preserve a lodging for Whitefield, or preserve his horse from stumbling, we ascribe to him the weak fondness and narrow understanding of human nature.

Nothing more ennobles and refines the mind than an unabating love of God, the stronger the better, so it be manly and decent, operating by a reverential dependance upon his protection, a full confidence in his mercy, and a perfect acquiescence in the dispensations of his Providence, as believing them to terminate ultimately in our good; but as this affection is overstrained by enthusiasts and devotees in a language unsuitable to it, when they talk of the soul pouring forth in pious breathings and transports, with their dear Lords, and sweet Jesu's, they leave nothing noble nor heavenly in it; but court the Almighty in the same sentiments they would court a mistress, and mingle their own passions, those too not of the purest kind, in their idea of the most holy.

It is requisite that wickedness should be represented as odious to him, and the persons immersed in it as living at enmity against him, because this may raise a horror of it in ourselves, and preserve us against catching the contagion from those who are deeply infected with it; but when this notion carries men to hate and detest, to vex and destroy one

one another for his sake, it is making him vindictive, rancorous, and cruel, and fastening a moral impurity upon him which any good man would be ashamed of. Thus there is a caution to be used in the management of the very topics employed to bring men into a holiness of temper; for, with a very little indiscretion, they may be made like other best things, which when corrupted become the worst.

5. For as we have remarked several times before, our ideas of the Divine character are all taken from archetypes found in our own; because we have none others wherefrom to describe any thing conceivable to our imagination. Hence it follows that our materials being defective, we can carry on the resemblance but a little way, without changing them, and employing new ones, oftentimes of a directly opposite colour, which being taken notice of by the unwary, who do not observe the necessity and occasion of it, involves them in perplexities and contradictions.

Perhaps this is no where more apparent than in the doctrine of Providence, which whoever holds, must acknowledge to have the disposal of the machinations and actions of men, as well as all other events; and in our two chapters upon that article, and upon Freewill, we have laid down, that every mi-

nute

nute motion, both in the human breast and among the bodies around us, was comprised and noticed in the plan of Providence. I would not then point out the consequences that might be drawn from this universal provision of causes, being unwilling to scandalize any body before I was ready to remove his scruples. If the candid reader has hitherto overlooked these consequences, it is so much the better; yet as we cannot expect but they will occur to him some time or other, it is incumbent upon us to prepare the antidote; and conceiving this the proper place for so doing, we shall not scruple to discover the poison, which is that we may seem to have made God the Author of sin.

For if all the follies and wickedness of mankind were owing to motives suggested by modifications of their organs, depending in a chain of certain effects upon the operations of the Almighty, then he must be esteemed the author and approver of those follies and wickedness, for which he made the provision of causes with knowledge and intention of the evil fruits they should produce: which to imagine, would be the highest offence against his holiness and justice, as representing the worst of crimes approved of by him, and punishment inflicted for faults whereunto he had led the transgressor by the workings of

his

his providence. Besides, as we have all along insisted upon a difference in actions, some drawing down the blessings and others the vengeance of Heaven upon our heads, we contradict ourselves egregiously in maintaining an opinion from whence it may be inferred that the most atrocious villainies are equally agreeable to God, and alike the object of his counsels, with the most consummate virtues. But this crying injury to his holy name we shall use our best endeavours to prevent, and at the same time to reconcile the contradictions charged upon our system.

6. Now in order to do this, let us endeavour to lay down in one view the several parts of our system, as formed by the decisions of our understanding, when in her utmost stretch of contemplation; or as calculated to model our imagination for directing us in the conduct of life. By which it will appear that the seeming contradictions and evil consequences apprehended in it, are only variations of language, and lights of placing things in, necessary for accommodating them to the different capacities of sensitive-rational animals. We have found it expedient in our chapter upon that article, and upon several occasions since, to represent God under two characters, as Creator, and as Governor of the Universe. In the former of those capa-

cities

cities he is incomprehensible, nor can we safely affirm any thing concerning his proceedings, the manner of them, or counsels directing them. We know he has interspersed a mixture of evil among his works, and though I have suggested very probable grounds to hope the quantity of it is inconceivably small in proportion to the good, yet that there is some, we feel daily by unwelcome experience: from hence we may presume the nature of things originally so constituted, as that the little sprinkling of evil was made necessary to support and secure the greater good.

But God in his capacity of Governor descends nearer to our comprehension: we may imagine him ruling with unwearied infinite goodness, a little restrained by the necessity he had imposed upon himself at the creation, but watchful to employ his power and wisdom for preventing the growth of evil beyond that necessity in any single instance, and impartial to distribute it in exact measure among all his creatures. In this view of his government, it appears his eye never terminates upon evil, but regards it only as a means to work out the greater good he graciously purposes to procure; and this is the only view wherein we can behold him, our optics being not suited to discern him in his work of creation. There may be creatures of more exalted intelligence,

telligence, endowed with faculties capacious enough to comprehend the original constitution of nature, to discover and contemplate Attributes unknown and unthought of by us. But their doctrine upon these matters would be unintelligible to the acutest of us, who are but as vulgar in comparison with them, and therefore must content ourselves with what they might regard as exoteries. Yet this inferior doctrine, I mean inferior with respect to other natures, is still too high to serve for our common use; so that we must divide it into that we may entertain in the closet, and that we shall find portable to carry about upon common occasions. And we shall begin with the former, as being the standard to regulate, and foundation whereon to construct the other.

7. The value of measures and quality of actions must be denominated from the whole amount of the fruits to be produced by them. The fond mother that indulges her child in every foolish fancy, does him hurt, although she procures him a present pleasure, because it is attended with mischievous consequences; and the prudent parent who sends his son away from the ease and conveniencies of home to the discipline and hardships of a school, does him a kindness, though he drives him into a disagreeable and painful road,

because it will lead to his accomplishment, his credit, and his greater enjoyment, when he comes out into the world. And in general, whatever we do to another however immediately pleasing, yet if we do it with intention to bring on mishief greater than the pleasure we give, it must be counted an act of malice. As on the other hand whatever we do troublesome or painful, yet if done with intention to procure greater benefit to the party, it is an instance of kindness and goodness. These then being the grounds whereon we make an estimation of our own actions, we can employ none other in estimating the divine: for as has been often remarked before, we can form no conception of God unless from archetypes found within ourselves. For this reason he is incomprehensible in his character of Creator, because we have nothing in our proceedings at all similar to the production of a substance to the assigning primary properties, or constituting the relations between one thing and another. Our employment lies in observing the things about us, their qualities, their relations to our well or ill being, and from thence contriving the methods requisite for attaining our purposes.

Upon this narrow bottom of experience we may raise an idea of our provident and beneficent

ficent Governor, whom we may conceive proceeding upon a constitution of things already established, capable of admitting an inexhaustible and boundless stream of happiness, but not without a small mixture of evil made necessary to introduce it. We may apprehend him not like ourselves, circumscribed within a little sphere of limited knowledge, but omniscient to discern distinctly all the substances existing, the situations they might be placed in, the mutual affections that might ensue upon their application to one another: and completly wise, to understand the effect of every motion and operation among them, of every combination of motions, and operations among them all, and look through every succession of causes to their remotest consequences. We may then figure to ourselves this infinite wisdom employed by infinite goodness to contrive a plan of nature, wherein all the good possible for the creatures should be contained, all methods put in ure for enhancing their happiness, not excepting such evils from whence a farther greater good might be marked out, and none admitted which will not redound to some signal benefit of the creation.

In this idea of divine Providence we shall find nothing unbecoming a wise and gracious Governor, nor are those provisions made for

the evils interspersed among his works, an impeachment of his goodness: for being made with a view to the good whereof they are necessarily productive, they fall properly under the denomination of acts of kindness and beneficence; it will perhaps be said that all this may account for the introduction of natural evil into the system of Providence, but does not reconcile us to the provision of motives drawing into moral evil, upon which the difficulty principally arose. But let us consider that the very existence of moral evil depends upon natural: for we could do no wrong if we could do nothing wherefrom some hurt or damage or displeasure might accrue either to ourselves or any other besides. Therefore natural evil being the ground which gives scope to moral, it will be worth while to bestow some particular consideration upon the former, whereby to gather light for discovering the consistency of the latter with wisdom and goodness.

8. Evils whereof we have any experience or comprehension may be ranged under two classes, Inevitable, and Avoidable: and each of these subdivided again into two species, distinguishable by the channels through which they fall upon us. Inevitable evils are either those we are subjected to by the constitution of our nature, as the infirmities of age, diseases,

and

and complaints occasioned by unwholsome airs or variations of weather, of else those whereto our ignorance of the means proper for preventing them renders us liable, such as sudden deaths, maimings or other bodily hurts by the stroke of lightning, which any body might easily escape, if he could but always know the particular spot, where the lightning will fall. Of avoidable evils, which nevertheless we do not avoid, some are prudential, such as labour, troubles, self-denials undergone voluntarily for the sake of some advantage to be gained thereby: others punitory, which we draw upon ourselves by our ill-conduct and wilful mismanagement.

And these several kinds of evils may spring from one another: for a man by his debaucheries may contract diseases he cannot afterwards get rid of; or by intemperance may so weaken his faculties that he shall not discern the dangers he might easily have avoided; or by extravagance reduce himself to such poverty as that it shall become prudent to submit to drudgery and hardships for his sustenance and support. In these cases the necessity rendering evil prudential, the distemper and ignorance subjecting to inevitable evil, may be ranked under the class of punitory, as on the other hand the latter may be styled prudential,

dential, when inflicted to secure peace, and good order, and the benefits of society.

9. It is an ancient and prevailing opinion, that physical evil was the effect of moral. Many orthodox divines hold that evil first entered into nature upon the rebellion of Lucifer, and was introduced into these sublunary regions by the sin of Man: for that the earth in its paradisiacal state had nothing of pain, disease, uneasiness, or trouble belonging to it. We have found so much in confirmation of this latter notion as to make it highly probable, that if mankind could once totally clear themselves of their attachment to present pleasure, their impotence of resisting desire, their indolence, and their selfishness, they might by their united endeavours quickly relieve themselves from all intolerable evils: and against what remained, they might arm themselves with such a temper of mind, as should change its nature, making it cease to be evil by drawing out its sting, and rendering it incapable of hurting them.

But though by these means they might restore a paradise upon earth, yet it is much to be doubted whether this paradise would extend to the brute creation. One may imagine, and but barely imagine, that the sagacity of man, improved and exerted to the utmost,

might

might enure the lions and wolves to live upon dead carcases, without worrying their brother animals: but one cannot even imagine how any human skill and industry could ever discipline the fish, or the insects, so that the pike should no longer be the terror of the lake, nor the shark reign as tyrant of the deep, nor the dolphin tire down the flying-fish, nor the spider entangle the heedless fly in his texture, and then destroy him with a lingering and painful death. But it is said the animals were mild, gentle, and innocent at the beginning: sporting the lion ramped, and in his paws dandled the kid; bears, ounces, tygers, pards gamboled before them: until their natures were changed upon the disobedience of man, for whose sake God cursed the ground with all its produce and inhabitants. Which brings the wants, pains, distresses, as well among brutes as men, under the idea of punitory.

There is likewise a heterodox notion tending to the same conclusion, which supposes a pre-existent state, wherein the spirits of men and animals, by the wrong use of the powers and liberty they then enjoyed, have made themselves obnoxious to the sufferings they now endure. Thus we find that men of different persuasions in other respects have agreed in ascribing physical evil to moral, as its cause

and

and origin. And this, if it were fully established, would give us a more favourable opinion of our existence: for it is some consolation to know, there are no evils in nature absolutely inevitable, and it leaves room to hope, that we may some time or other attain a competent knowledge and strength of mind sufficient to secure us against every mischief.

Besides it is more easy to comprehend how the sufferings for wrong doing may be productive of the good we have supposed in a former place resulting therefrom, than inevitable mischiefs: because they will naturally spur on those creatures, who have knowledge of the causes they flow from, to use their activity in practising the methods requisite for escaping them; whereas what is absolutely unavoidable can have no influence upon the conduct. Yet it must be acknowledged, that in case either of hurts consequent upon faults committed in a pre-existent state, or of miseries brought upon animals by the wickedness of man, they do not yield a profitable fruit to the creatures suffering; therefore, since we have laid down that every evil is productive of good somewhere or other, the benefit must redound to some other creatures. Which may serve as an argument to prove the connection of interests between the visible world, and the invisible.

10. But

10. But were neither of the before-mentioned hypotheses to be admitted, yet it is notorious that one creature often profits by the hurts and labours of another, and suffers by the faults of another. We find it necessary to slaughter animals for our sustenance, and put them to severe drudgeries in our service. In return we are forced to toil and trouble in the care of creatures useful to us: there are insects which prey upon our flesh, our blood, and our vitals, perhaps in greater multitudes than we are aware of: some diseases, and it has been imagined all of them, proceeding from an imperceptible vermin swarming within us. These instances may corroborate our opinion of the general connexion, and afford a strong presumption that the mischiefs which do not contribute to the benefit of any creatures we see, contribute to that of others we do not see: and what we have observed before concerning the divine equity, ensures to every individual his proportionable share of the good and evil he brings upon others.

Such considerations duly attend to, might silence the clamours of those free-thinkers who urge the absurdity of our being punished for crimes whereof we are not conscious, or of the innocent suffering for the wickedness of the guilty. Because, say they, such severities can do us no good, as neither directing

ing us what to do, or what to avoid, nor encouraging us to pursue one course of behaviour, rather than another. But though it should do us no good, how can they know it may not prove an example and direction to other Beings, or to ourselves in some other form of Being, when we may have faculties to cast a retrospect, not only upon our sufferings, but likewise upon the prior conduct that brought us obnoxious to them? Correction of the offender and restraint of vice among mankind is one end of punishment, but not the sole nor the principal: for we stand as a spectacle to other creatures, whose numbers are greater, and interest more important than our own. For they having a full discernment of the general interest and the divine equity, will see that evil cannot befal any where without a diminution of happiness in the universe, and consequently in the share of every member composing it: therefore will look upon our sufferings as a damage to themselves, which will give them the proper effect of punishment, creating an aversion against the practices occasioning them, as being detrimental to all in general.

11. Having found reasons for ascribing the origin of all pain and suffering to the misconduct either of the party enduring them, or of others to whom he stands in some respect related, it remains next to enquire into the

the rise of moral evil. Whenever we do wrong we are prompted thereto by the impulse of some desire, appearing more satisfactory to our apprehension than the dictates of judgment or conscience. For it has been shewn in the course of this work, that the mind acts constantly upon motives; such as they are, such precisely her action is: nor is this inconsistent with free will, which depends upon the absence of all impediment against the operations of the mind taking effect upon her own volitions, but not at all upon the causes influencing her to operate. But all motives are perceptions wherein the mind is purely passive, being acted upon by the mechanical motions of our organization striking the perceptions upon her: and this alike as well in our deliberate or voluntary, as in our inadvertent or spontaneous thoughts. For whether I play upon an organ myself, or have one that will play by clock-work, still it is the mechanical motions of the keys, the air passing through the pipes, and undulations coming from thence, that impress perceptions of the sound upon my mind: and if the organ be out of order, I cannot procure perfect music either way: whence it appears that the behaviour of man depends upon the condition of his mental organization.

Now to account for the disorder of our machine

chine let us take the orthodox scheme, and suppose that as a man by his debaucheries may entail diseases upon his children, which shall continue from generation to generation, so the sin of our first parents worked such a distemperature into their interior frame, as spoiled the constitution of their posterity ever since. We must look then for the origin of our own depravity in the first fatal step of our primogenitors: and we shall find that to have proceeded from their ignorant simplicity, and the temptation thrown in their way; causes antecedent to the act of transgressing.

God had prohibited their eating the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden upon pain of death, and it does not appear they would have ever entertained a thought of transgressing of themselves, but if the fruit at any time had chanced to catch their eyes, they would instantly have taken them off to some other object. But the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. It is not necessary to suppose the woman immediately believed the serpent, or was willing to take his word rather than God's: but what she heard perplexed her: for being wholly unexperienced in falshood, she had no notion of any such thing.

thing. Suspicion could not enter her thoughts, as having never had a cause in any thing happening before to alarm it, she had always been used to look upon every thing as true that was told her, and now to be told that the fruit was of excellent quality, and that God himself knew it to be so, when he had before declared it mortal, must throw her into an utter astonishment. In these circumstances it was natural for her to consider attentively that fruit which was the subject of her astonishment, if perchance something might be discovered therein to disentangle the perplexity: we all do so upon the like occasion, nor can one find any thing blameable in the procedure.

Thus far then here was no guilt nor disobedience, nc wrong turn of the will: but being thus innocently drawn to fix an earnest attention upon the tree, she saw that it was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. That is, her looks dwelling upon the tree, and her thoughts upon the suggestions of the serpent, introduced stronger ideas of the deliciousness of the fruit and desirableness of wisdom, than she had ever known before, she had already eaten other fruits, and had found their sweetness and their wholsomness correspond with the fairness of their appearance:

pearance: from whence she had gotten an appetite giving a preference to whatever looked ripe and blooming. She had seen Adam give names to all the animals expressive of their natures, and no doubt had known many other instances of his knowledge being superior to her's. They had both had perpetual occasion to contemplate the wisdom and omniscience of God manifested in the admirable structure and contrivance of his works. But this admiration of wisdom was no more than a cool judgment of its excellency, and the advantage of possessing higher degrees of knowledge rather than lower, without creating a desire of raising their faculties above the present pitch, which they had no prospect of effecting: and their appetite being abundantly satisfied with the foods allowed them, could never grow to a vehement craving.

But now the woman, beguiled by the artifice of the serpent, beheld the delicious fruit and the present means suggested of attaining a godlike wisdom, with desire, yet being withholden from eating by the prohibition, desire, as it will naturally do while entertained in the thoughts without being gratified, grew more and more importunate. Still we do not find any thing to blame in her; she had indeed committed a fatal error, but

but we cannot call it a misbehaviour, for she was not apprized of her danger, nor knew the consequences of suffering the sensitive part to gather head above the rational. Her close attention to the fruit, and its pretended virtues, was not an idle curiosity, nor a criminal indulgence, but an honest attempt to get information upon the doubts that perplexed her.

12. But desire being grown exorbitant, her reflection on the command to abstain became uneasy to her; which uneasiness got hold on the Will, influencing her to use endeavours for stifling the reflection, and turning her notice upon the allurements in her fancy; by this means bringing herself to believe, because she wished it were true, that what the serpent had said was right, and that God was not in earnest when he made the denunciation. In this manner I conceive sin entered into the world, beginning in a wilful infidelity, which is always accompanied with a like wilful partiality to some fond passion or appetite; and this was the first wrong election the woman made; or, in the language of some people, the first abuse of her power of indifferency, whereby she annexed the idea of best to an act of disobedience; and then the judgment being perverted, no wonder it led her to practise that, which now appeared the best;

best; so she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat. And when she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat, we may presume he was prevailed on by the like process as she had been.

Thus we see the free-will of our ancestors warped to a wrong bias in the same manner as ours is, namely, by desire catching away the idea of satisfaction from judgment and conscience; for when the urgency of desire becomes so pressing as to create an intolerable uneasiness, it makes present gratification appear preferable to remote good or rectitude, and gains the consent of the Will to an action known and discerned to be wrong. But the steps by which desire rose to this urgency proceeded from antecedent and external causes: to wit, the original formation of the woman, when the rib was fashioned into a machinery wherein the sensitive organs were made capable of striking colours, too strong for the rational to counterbalance; her artless simplicity, unapprised of the danger, and unacquainted with the quality of external allurements to raise a violence in the organs by their repeated action, and the malice of the serpent to take a base advantage of her weakness and innocence.

If we go on further to trace the rise of this malice in the serpent, or the wicked spirit possessing

possessing it, we must ascribe it to the perverseness worked into his nature by his fall from an angel of light. It would be too bold to pronounce any thing confidently concerning angels, or their manner of Action, but if we will reason at all about them, we must employ our own ideas; and it is scarce possible to conceive that an angel enjoying the beatific vision, exempt from passion or frailty, and having a perfect understanding, should ever think of rebelling against Omnipotence: therefore when he entertained this thought, he must have been in a state of ignorance and error, an overweening conceit of his own excellence and power; and have fallen from his angelic intelligence before he fell from his allegiance. Nor is it conceivable that he should have thrown away any part of his intelligence voluntarily, but was reduced to error and darkness by some provision of causes working an effect necessary with respect to him; agreeably to that ancient saying, Whom Jove would destroy, he first infatuates.

Upon our hypothesis of the Mundane Soul, each component spirit in its state of absorption having communication of perceptions with the rest, must know the qualities of matter, and effect of a vital union therewith to introduce moral and physical evil: therefore cannot be imagined to immerse itself

therein of choice or through ignorance. But when a discerption happens, it must be brought about by the dust of the ground or some corporeal particles being moulded into organization, and the spirit being breathed thereinto, as the breath of life, whereby the whole composition, bodily, and spiritual, will become a living soul or animal. Now whether we suppose this discerption effected by divine agency, or certain laws of nature established for that purpose, or that the Mundane Soul, discerning the necessity of immersed spirits to support its own happiness, withdraws its communication from those to whose turn it comes in rotation to undergo the burden of this public service; or that the spirits themselves, sensible of that necessity and the equitableness of sharing their proportion in the evil as well as the good, undertake the task when falling to their lot, without reluctance: still we shall find an innocent ignorance and imbecility, and the mechanical operations of a material organization to be the causes preceding the first taint of moral evil in them.

Or whatever other pre-existent scheme you adopt, yet you must always allow the creatures to have been good and upright before their first wilful misbehaviour, whereby they worked a debasement in their nature: for else you will ascribe their defect of goodness directly

directly to the author of their nature. But during their state of goodness and uprightness, it would be quite out of character to suppose them doing any thing coolly, deliberately, and knowingly, to put themselves out of this state: therefore they must either have been drawn unwittingly into an immersion in matter, by steps the consequences of which they were not aware of, or there must have been some pressing desire or uneasiness raised in them without their own agency, rendering present gratification and ease more satisfactory, than the practice of what they know to be right.

But if you reject all the foregoing hypotheses, and insist upon children being born in the original innocence of the grandmother Eve, we shall still find evil introduced among them by the same process. We came into the world little different from Brutes, without idea of right and wrong, having sense and appetite for the guides of our conduct, and justified in following them because destitute of any other. Reason is not reckoned to open until seven years old: but without ascertaining the precise time, it is certainly much younger than desire, which having gotten the start in growth becomes too vigorous for it to control. So that when reason begins to operate, it can only discover what is right without raising an appetite sufficient to

make us pursue it: unless by good management of parents, or good fortune, some passion or desire can be brought to assist in overpowering the rest. And if any one denies that it is some desire, whose rising in the mind was not our own act, which prompts us in every failure of our duty, let him produce an instance wherein any man refuses to do what in his clear judgment he discerns to be right, when he apprehends nothing disagreeable in the performance, and no inclination or habit leads a contrary way: or ever shuts his eyes against reason, without a previous suspicion that it would direct him to something he does not like.

13. Thus in all the avenues through which we can imagine sin to enter among the creatures, we find it introduced by a provision of causes made previously to its entrance: and the whole progress tracing it backwards, seems to have been as follows. Things were so constituted at the creation as that a certain quantity of suffering was made necessary to the enjoyments of the perceptive Beings created. Our gracious Governor, on forming his universal plan of Providence, interspersed the requisite mixture of suffering therein, for the sake of that unspeakable happiness that should be worked out thereby: yet he would not inflict it with his own hand, but chose rather so to order his courses of nature and fortune,

fortune, as that it should ensue in consequence of wilful misbehaviour among the creatures. Yet neither would he impel them to misbehave, but placed them in such circumstances of ignorance and imbecility as should influence them by the urgency of motives to choose freely what they knew to be wrong. Nor perhaps were this ignorance and imbecility brought on by a chain of necessary causes, but he may have given his perfect spirits such discernment as to see the expedience of driving one another thereinto; or undertaking it voluntarily out of an equitable disposition, not covetous of engrossing the whole of happiness to themselves, in which case we shall find the causes of moral evil derive their origin from prudence and duty, and the most exalted public spirit.

I have promised to build nothing upon hypothesis, therefore shall not pursue this last supposition to any consequences that might be drawn from it as from a certain fact: nevertheless, I may employ it as an imaginary case, to shew how the steps conducting to moral evil might be taken without imputation of unholiness. For if the spirits while in the perfect state, involve one another or themselves, in a dangerous ignorance and imbecility whenever equity requires, in contemplation of the mischiefs to be incurred thereby being necessary to the good of the community, we cannot

not rank this view under the denomination of malice, or envy, or sensuality, or any other kind of unholiness. In like manner, should we suppose the imperfection brought on by a chain of necessary causes, deriving from the first disposition of Providence, made with the same view, neither shall we thereby charge the Disposer of events with unholiness.

For let us take the points in the line of this view severally in order: the creatures in their original constitution, were made capable of an immense enjoyment; but this enjoyment was not worked into their natures as a primary property, it was to be the effect of an application of some means employed to excite it in them. This happiness then we must regard as the ultimate point whereon the view of Providence terminates, and proceeds next to the means whereby it might be effected; but a certain proportion of suffering being among the requisite means, if the plan had been so ordered as that the exact measure should have been brought on by necessary causes, or even by immediate exertions of Omnipotence, these would have been acts of kindness by the rule laid down in § 7. Where then is the difference upon suffering being made punitory instead of inevitable? The weight of it is the same from whatever causes arising, or through whatever channels deriving; and it is this weight that makes wrong doing

doing to be what it is, for nothing is wrong that has not a tendency to some damage. Thus moral evil, as we have observed in a former place, were no evil if there were no natural, and is no greater than the mischiefs whereof it may be productive. Where then the mischiefs produced are acts of kindness, and constantly consistent with perfect goodness, the introduction of moral evil necessary to produce them will fall under the same denomination, and consequently be consistent with perfect holiness. But what is apt to scandalize us upon this topic is, that holiness in ourselves being a moral sense and habit, we cannot do a wrong thing knowingly, even for the sake of some signal profit to accrue therefrom, without making a breach into the authority of our moral sense and strength of our habit, thereby losing our holiness, and setting an example, that may endanger the mischief to spread further than we intended. From hence we conceive the like of God; and because it is our duty to be holy as he is holy, we suppose holiness the same thing in him, as it is in us; whereas we should consider that his holiness is not an effect of moral senses or habits, preventing the growth of a depravity which can never take root in him; but a branch of his wisdom and goodness, discerning and inclining him to the things most beneficial for his creatures.

Therefore

Therefore whenever these Attributes point to moral evil, as ultimately productive of their benefit, he can make provision for it without departing from his holiness, or endangering consequences he does not design; for he sees all the recesses of the heart, knows all the springs of action, and has the forming and marshaling of all causes at his disposal; therefore can say to iniquity as he does to the sea, Hitherto shall thy proud waves come, but no further; so may break down the bounds any where to let in an inundation, without hazard of its spreading ever so little further than requisite to answer his gracious purposes.

14. It has been often remarked, upon observation of the course of events in this world, that crosses, afflictions, and misfortunes, turn out to the advantage of the persons falling under them, or of others; and that good frequently springs out from evil of both kinds. Treatises have been written to shew that private vices are public benefits; and though they have justly given offence, by the subject being handled in such a manner as to make it appear an encouragement to vice, yet the fact cannot well be denied by an impartial observer. But when we come to examine how vice produces any benefit, we shall always find it to be by checking or counterbalancing the effect of some other more pernicious

nicious vice: so it must make work for itself, and can never do good until it has done the mischief, which by a contrary species of depravity it may afterwards rectify. Thus if there were no covetousness there would need no extravagance; if there were no carelessness there would be no want of theft, and cheating, to keep men vigilant; if they had not pride and vanity, there would be no use for censoriousness, and calumny which serve to mortify them; if the world was without bigotry, it would have no occasion for free-thinking; if there was not canting and terrifying in Religion, no good could come of profane swearing or scoffing. And the like may be said of losses and misfortunes, whose benefit is only to awaken our indolence and thoughtlessness, to curb some presumption, or rub off the rust that had gathered upon us by long ease and prosperity.

Thus how much soever particular vices may prove advantageous as mankind stands circumstanced, yet vice in general is wholly pernicious: and if they could once get entirely clear of it, they would never want its help, nor any of those troubles, pains, diseases, and sinister accidents, whose service lies in correcting it. Therefore so far as our judgment may decide in the matter, we may conclude that moral and physical evil upon the whole

contribute nothing to the benefit of mankind, but our condition would be much better, were both of them totally banished from among us. Nor can we doubt the power and wisdom of God to have excluded them: a terrestrial state exempt from them both, is not repugnant to our ideas, as appears from the many descriptions given of a paradise, or golden age.

But the infinite goodness of our Almighty Governor, void of neither love nor mercy to any of his works, is now universally received as an article both of orthodox and philosophical faith: we have endeavoured to confirm it in the course of this work by arguments drawn from experience and observation, and to shew that it would be blaspheming his holy name to suppose his views ever terminating upon evil. Since then evil is admitted into that part of his system of Providence respecting ourselves, and yet does not terminate in our benefit, it seems necessarily to follow, that there is a connection of interests between the visible world and the invisible, between the human species and higher orders of Beings: so that all the troubles of this life and miseries of the next, incurred by wickedness committed here, redound to the far greater benefit of other creatures, for else they would have been prevented, or remedied.

medied. How this benefit accrues therefrom, it may not be possible for us to explain, but that some signal benefit does accrue, we may be convinced by the foregoing considerations.

And from what has been argued in former Chapters concerning the divine Equity, it follows, that whatever tends to the advantage of the universe, tends some time or other, to the advantage of every individual contained therein, and consequently of the sufferer himself. Thus if all suffering be an evil of the punitory kind with respect to the creatures, it is all of the prudential with respect to their Governor: and a measure of prudence can never be deemed repugnant to holiness. So that when we speak of the formation of the plan of Providence, we may conclude in the same style as Moses did of the creation. The Lord comprised therein all those treasures of happiness whereof his perceptive creatures were capable: and he interspersed so much pain and suffering, but not a jot more, as was necessary to work out that happiness: and he admitted such streams of moral evil as should bring on that pain and suffering, confining them within certain stated bounds, that they should not in any wise overflow further than he purposed: and he made provision of causes for ignorance and imbecility,

imbecility, just sufficient to open the sluices of those streams. And the Lord looked upon the whole form of the plan that he had contrived, and upon every line, and spot, and point thereof, and behold it was very good. And he gave motions to his material, and ideas to his spiritual substances, to carry on the exact succession of events he had ordained. And the Lord rested from his work, until the appointed times should arrive, according to the vacant spaces left purposely in his plan, wherein he had before determined to interpose with his own hand for manifestation of his power and of his dominion to his intelligent creatures.

15. By placing things in this light, I think we may reconcile the system of Providence to our ideas of goodness and holiness: the whole difficulty being now thrown off upon the original constitution of substances, whereby good was made necessarily dependant upon a mixture of evil. And this it is no wonder we do not understand, being a work of creation, whereof we have not faculties to discern any thing distinctly. For creation, and the first establishment of the nature of things with their mutual relations, is a pure act, having nothing prior whereon to ground the measures of it. But we have no conception of a pure act proceeding without

out intelligence, I mean, intelligence such in kind as our own, that is, a discernment of objects, relations, and truths, already existing; whereas unless we will give into the absurdity of two First Causes, we cannot admit any objects, or relations, or truths subsisting independantly on the Creator, or prior to his establishment of them. Therefore we must take the primary properties of substances, and nature of things as we find them, without spending ourselves in fruitless enquiries after their origin: and may rest abundantly satisfied with the disposition thereof by our allwise Governor, whom we may acknowledge, upon the foregoing representation made of his provisions, ordering all things for the best, to be infinitely gracious, beneficent, and holy.

If any very righteous person shall take offence at our ranking the Causes influencing to moral evil among the provisions of heaven, let him remember that the like is done more directly in the Sacred Writings, where mention is made of hardening Pharaoh's heart, and of tempting men upon other occasions. Add to this, that we are instructed in our daily prayers to petition that God would not lead us into temptation, which implies that he sometimes does: for it would be an absurdity and mockery to pray, that the moon and stars might not fall upon our heads, that the ground

ground we stand on might not lose its solidity so as to let us drop through to the centre, or for averting any other mischief whereof there is not some hazard that it might befal. But are we not forbidden to say, when temptations assail us, that we are tempted of God, or to think otherwise than that we are drawn aside by our own lusts? And is it not repugnant to reason, and natural Religion to imagine him the author of sin, or approver of all the follies and wickedness abounding among mankind? Must not such a notion prove subversive of all morality, and introductive of a general licentiousness, misrule, and confusion?

This I never meant to deny, and therefore would not have such thoughts entertained in our imagination. But we have shewn by several instances in the preceding Chapters, that imagination is too gross or too scanty to take in the whole circle of objects discernible by understanding: that it would be mischievous or highly inconvenient, if not impracticable, to conceive of some things in all particulars wherein we may know them to be true: and that there is one set of ideas proper for contemplations of the closet, but another very different, better suited to direct us in our ordinary conduct. I shall now attempt an examination of the exoteric doctrines

trines upon this article, which we may conveniently carry about for our own common use, and may communicate safely to all comers, without so much hazard of misleading, or being misapprehended, as we might have been liable to, in the others.

16. An universal Providence, extending to all minutest events happening throughout the world, is by much too large an idea for us to contain: we are quickly bewildered in that infinite variety of complicated causes concurring to almost every production, and lost in the length of operations succeeding one another from the beginning of every chain, therefore content ourselves with contemplating one, or a few near causes most material for us to take notice of. The fall of Troy is commonly ascribed to the inveiglements of Paris and elopement of Helen: but the constitution of the Grecian and Trojan states, their alliances, their military discipline, natural strength and prowess, the political artifices employed to bring them together, and innumerable other causes, were concurring to compleat the catastrophe. Nor are we shorter in computing the multitude, than tracing the length of our causes.

Horace blames the poet who should begin the Trojan war from Leda's Egg, yet it must be owned the mother's education or example,

the effects of whatever amour was figured by the celestial swan, and former precedents of stealing away ladies from foreign countries, might be the prior causes of Helen's elopement. And the condition and discipline of the powers engaged, depended upon the birth and breeding given to the combatants by their parents, upon the acts of former heroes and legislators, upon the manner of their first settlements in colonies, and other higher sources, which it would be neither needful nor practicable for us to investigate.

Nor are we less confined in our prospect of effects than of causes: we reckon the consequences of Helen's infidelity to terminate in the destruction of Ilium, the ruin and dispersion of its inhabitants; but what further effects this dispersion had upon other countries, we do not take into account nor can fully estimate. If it be true that Eneas laid the first foundations of the Roman empire from whose ashes our modern kingdoms are sprung, it will appear highly probable that our own condition at this day would have been very different from what it is, whether better or worse we cannot tell, if Helen had been more discreet. Thus the circle of our vision stands circumscribed on all sides; our discernment into the courses of events has but scanty bounds both in length and breadth;

we

we can neither count the threads whereof they are contexted, nor trace them to the beginning, or to the end.

So that our views of nature are like the map of an inland country, where you see rivers without any sources, continually discharging their waters without a sea to receive them; roads that you know not from whence they come, nor whither they conduct; mountains, forests, and plains cut off in the middle by the marginal lines of your paper. In like manner we are forced to divide the plan of Providence into many little plans proportionable to the scale of our imagination or extent of our discernment, each whereof we contemplate singly at a time; taking whatever lies at the top of them for original causes, and all we find at the bottom for ultimate ends. For we consider properties in compound bodies, motions in the elements, in vegetable and animal organizations, without thinking of the sources from which they derived; we find designs and desires rise in our minds, without knowing from whence they came: and we regard the effect these things may have upon our well or ill being, or relative to our uses, without diving into further consequences, wherein we have no apparent concern.

By this means our system becomes replete

with multitudes of agents and powers, appearing to us as original sources of events and which may be ranged under three general classes, Nature, Chance, and Free-will. We acknowledge indeed that all these powers lie under the continual inspection and control of our supreme Governor, who turns them by the secret workings of his Providence, operating in a manner unaccountable by us, to answer such purposes as in his wisdom he judges proper. Now when we come to enquire what these purposes must be, we can think them none other than such as are good, and gracious, and beneficent: for it is repugnant to our ideas to imagine any malice, or envy, or iniquity, or sensuality, or other unholiness in the character of God, or that his views ever terminate upon evil: and herein we coincide with the esoteric scheme. But by reason of the scantiness of our plan, we commonly apprehend his views to terminate where our own do, therefore ascribe whatever we can discern to be good, either in the possession or the consequences to his providence; and for all else we do not want sources to assign it: for there are the imperfections of nature, the rovings of chance, the follies and misbehaviour of mankind, to account for physical evil; and the perverseness of freewill, to account for moral.

17. Never-

17. Nevertheless, all nature and all the powers of nature being subject to the divine power, it is manifest that the evils worked by them could not have befallen against the divine Will, because nothing has happened which that Will might not have prevented, therefore we say they were permitted. And this is enough to give them progress, for there being Agents and causes everywhere ready at hand to produce evil, there needs no more than permission to let them take their course, without making provision for setting them at work. So the office of Providence remains only to work out the good, and restrain its contrary within due boundaries. If it be said that permitting is the same thing as causing or doing; for he that sees a villain go to assassinate a person whom he could easily save but will not, can never escape the imputation of murder: whoever urges this objection, must be very little acquainted with the nature of the human mind, whose uses we are now solely to consult. For though in our speculative moods we can scarce find a difference between permission and action, yet they appear in very different colours to the imagination.

A humane benevolent man might scruple to cut off a leg, to hang up a malefactor, to kill an ox or sheep himself, yet may suffer

and even employ the surgeon, the executioner, and the butcher to do it: and when we read of Morocco emperors putting criminals to death with their own hand, we always look upon it as a mark of a cruel, savage, and vindictive temper. It is a common saying that you must set a rogue to catch a rogue; but an honest man would disdain stooping to those base and treacherous artifices employed by the rogue he sets to betray his accomplice. A minister having as much conscientiousness as ambition, might scruple in his own person to tempt the honest but weak and needy servant of a foreign prince to betray his master's secrets: yet make no difficulty to send his emissaries, for that purpose, when he finds it necessary for the interests and preservation of his own country. Were he to do the former, we should have a mean and odious opinion of him: were he to boggle at the latter, not only his ill wishers and the grumblers, but the more candid and considerate, would condemn him as over scrupulous, narrow minded, and insufficient for his office.

Since then we find so striking a difference with respect to the moral character between doing and permitting, as that we may innocently suffer a thing to be done which would fix a blemish upon us to do, it is commendable to preserve the same distinction in our

conceptions

conceptions of Providence. For as we have observed before, the ingredients in our idea, more especially our exoteric idea of God are all taken from archetypes found within ourselves: for we cannot see him as he is, nor penetrate into the essence of his nature, therefore ought to model our apprehensions according to our best notions of perfection and holiness. And I believe any common man, perhaps any man whatever, in his ordinary trains of thinking, when he has not leisure to extend, to compare and examine his reflections on all sides, would be more shocked at the thought of provision being purposely made for the sins of men, than at their being permitted.

18. Not that the general apprehensions of mankind were always of this cast, for the Gentiles often heard of the deceits, the adulteries, the revenges, the murders, practised by their Gods, without thinking the worse of them; and the Jews were bred up in such strong persuasions of a Theocracy, directing every good or evil that befel their nation, stirring up enemies against them, sometimes tempting men and hardening their hearts, that they were brought by education and custom to look upon these things as not incompatible with holiness. And whoever will carefully examine the general tenor of

the

the Scriptures, will find them approach nearer upon this article to our esoteric than to the modern vulgar doctrine. Therefore it was no improper instruction for them to pray, Lead us not into temptation. This our expositors in general now interpret, Ward off those temptations that would be thrown upon us by other Agents.

Nor are there instances wanting elsewhere of their annexing other ideas to the text than did originally and naturally belong to it: so that it seems easier for them to justify, than deny the fact. For they may rest their justification upon the fundamental principle even of their adversaries, to wit, upon the nature of things: for what things are of nearer concern to us, than our own apprehensions, the make and cast of our imagination? or what nature more incumbent upon us to study, than our own? But custom being a second nature, the variations worked thereby must be regarded in forming a practical doctrine. It is the business of a physician to study nature, nor does he depart from his rule when he varies his methods according to the temperature and constitution of his patients; when he recommends exercise in a palsy or a lethargy, but rest and composure in a fever; when he prescribes copious phlebotomy to the Frenchman, but more sparingly to the Spaniard

niard or the English. In like manner a physician of souls follows nature by instilling sentiments adapted to times and circumstances, and explaining those which were salutary only to the antient Jew or Gentile, in such manner as may bring them suitable to modern digestion.

For my part, I must confess I could never prefer that petition in the strict literal sense with any devotion, therefore am forced to take the comment for my private use. Nor is it in matters of Religion alone that I find it impracticable to make apprehension keep pace with knowledge: for in my common scenes of business or diversion, I cannot conceive the stedfast ground I stand upon, to rush forward incessantly nine hundred miles in a minute; nor the wainscot shelves supporting my heavy folios, to contain above forty times more of empty pore than solid substance; nor the yielding air to press upon my flesh with many tons weight without my feeling it; nor the compactest bodies I see or handle, to be made of little particles smaller than the finest dust raised by a chariot wheel, holden together without any strings or cement between, by external pressure of ether: all which are certain truths demonstrated to us in the schools. Thus the modern exposition stands founded upon

reason and the nature of things, nor can it justly be charged as a prevarication and departure from authority; for we are told that our instructor preached to the poor, that is, the vulgar of his own times: therefore it is no profane or improbable presumption to suppose, that had he been to come in our days and preach to the poor now living, he would have altered his form from Lead, into Protect us against temptations, or perhaps Permit them not to fall upon us.

19. But our ideas of goodness and holiness will not allow us to think any thing permitted through oversight, nor unless with a view of some gracious purpose beyond: for it is no uncommon thing for Providence to bring forth good out of evil, and when we can discern this, it gives us a fuller display of the divine wisdom and fatherly care than we should otherwise have had. As for troubles and misfortunes, we often find reason to be thankful for their having fallen upon us: a painful disease or dangerous accident has brought many a heedless creature to seriousness and consideration: and the foundations of prudence are generally laid in disappointment, for it is this that puts us upon exerting our sagacity and industry in taking better measures for the future. Even our pleasures spring in great measure from evil, for they consist

consist chiefly in action and employment, and most of the business of life lies in providing for the wants and necessities of nature, or securing ourselves against inconveniencies that have proved irksome to us: so that if there were no danger of mischief that might hurt or incommode us, our time would pass insipid for want of something to do.

The pleasures of indolence and indulgence of our humours, however delightful at first, are not of a nature to last long: therefore those who place their dependance upon them quickly find them end in disgust and loathing, if they have not something from time to time to ruffle the calm, and give a quickness to their languid desires; a novelty to objects they had been satiated with. And for such as have long schemes of distant advantage in pursuit, they could not furnish out the full career, if it were not for the rubs and difficulties intervening in the way. Nor do labour and uneasiness want efficacy to create pleasure, by making the very deliverance from them an enjoyment: sickness renders health more delightful; crosses and squabbles give a double relish to peace and quiet, and he that should never know a trouble could scarce be said to know the value of ease. For we judge of things by comparison, and never feel the happiness of our condition so sensibly

bly as when reflecting upon a worse, especially one that we have experienced ourselves.

The mischiefs we run ourselves into by folly and ignorance give birth to our philosophy: for who would take pains to hunt after deeper knowledge, if the superficial notices of common sense were sufficient to secure him against every danger he apprehended: our common topics of thanksgiving are either the deliverance from trouble we have laboured under ourselves, or misfortunes we have seen fall upon others; our sublimest virtues of benevolence and piety spring from our vexations and dislikes: while in youth, health, and plenty, men can find the sources of gratification within their own fund, so are apt to think of themselves alone and their own pleasures without regard to other people, or to the giver of all their blessings; but when distresses fall upon them from which they cannot extricate themselves, they can then see the need of assistance and understand the expedience of mutual good will and good offices, and when all human help fails, they then begin to think of seeking it elsewhere. It is a common observation, that uninterrupted prosperity makes men forgetful of God and their future state; the troubles, the dangers, and shortness of continuance in this

world

world are what puts them upon looking towards another: for he that is secure and satisfied in his present condition has little inducement to endeavour attaining a better; nor perhaps are there any who wish to be in heaven until they can stay no longer here, or until reduced to a situation wherein they can find no pleasure in life.

20. Neither is moral evil incapable of being made to yield excellent fruits: the foulness and fatal consequences of one man's wickedness may serve as a warning to thousands to beware of the steps leading into the like, and his indulgence of a vicious appetite sometimes proves the means of eradicating it. For while there are restrictions keeping vice within bounds, it cannot do its worst: but when permitted to take its full swing, it hurries into mischiefs that make its pernicious quality palpably manifest, and work a reformation. So that it may be said of some, they would not be so good as they are, if they had been restrained from being so bad as they were.

Besides that vices curb and correct one another; for being extremes, their contrary attractions serve as a balance to keep them from deviating too far out of the middle way. The covetous and extravagant would be more so but for each other's company: pride

pride and vanity rouse up laziness, and are themselves restrained by the trouble there is in supporting them. Ambition supplies the the place of public spirit: emulation that of honour, resentment or insensibility stand in the room of courage; and a servile compliance with fashions performs the office of decency and good nature. How many industrious poor find employment in satisfying the needless wants of the rich? How much of the public revenues arise from the follies and luxuries of mankind? And how much of the public services is performed by an immoderate thirst of gain or applause, or by an averseness to labour and an irregularity of conduct, driving men into perilous professions?

All which things demonstrate the wisdom of Providence, that can produce order out of confusion, the fruits of a most consummate prudence out of self-interest, thoughtlessness, and inordinate passions. For when we reflect how many thousands there are who would cut any man's throat for half-a-crown, how many of the scum of our people have been employed in protecting us against our foreign enemies, how much power is sometimes vested in the hands of persons who care for nothing but themselves; it seems a miracle that there should be any such

thing

thing as law, or government, or property in the world; much more that we should live in that peace, and plenty, and security, which we enjoy.

Nor are instances wanting both in sacred and profane history, of signal benefits made to grow out of an evil root: the hardness of Pharaoh gave room for the divine power and glory to display themselves: the malice of the Jews and treachery of Judas were instrumental to the redemption: the tyranny and greediness of an English monarch, together with the scandalous lives of the priesthood brought about our deliverance from the greater tyranny and corruption of Popery: the unreasonable lengths of Cromwell's party instructed our forefathers at the revolution, how to frame the constitution upon a solid and equitable footing: the extravagances of methodism and licentiousness of free-thinking help to purify Religion from the dross of opposite kinds, by putting our learned men upon studying the use of human understanding without abusing it, and guard against the two specious but dangerous errors of being righteous overmuch, and wise overmuch; or perhaps preventing themselves from advancing hastily things that would not stand the scrutiny, or laying greater stress upon

orthodoxy

orthodoxy and externals than upon a rational and useful tenor of conduct.

Neither can we well imagine virtue itself to subsist without some deviations from it; for if we were never permitted to do wrong, we could not choose but to do right; and where there is no choice, there is no merit, or commendation, or reward. Were temptations never to assault us, we need take no thought of our conduct; and were they not sometimes to overcome us, we should have no incitement to diligence and watchfulness, nor to fortify ourselves with those good purposes and habits that conduct to our happiness: for it is the frequent struggling with an adversary and being sometimes foiled by him, that whets our sagacity, exercises our strength, and adds sturdiness to our resolution.

21. Therefore since offences must needs come, because they give being and vigour to virtue, because they terminate in mischiefs that serve as a necessary example and warning to keep the world in order, because they are made instrumental to gracious purposes which would have been frustrated without them: we cannot find any thing to disturb us in the thought of their being permitted. Nay if we consider the matter fairly, we must acknowledge the permission of them an act of mercy and kindness: for if the evils they produce

duce be necessary, they must have fallen heavier by being brought on any other way. Had diseases consequent upon debauchery and lewdness been made inevitable, they would have given us a more unfavourable idea of Providence, than being placed in every man's power by care and sobriety to avoid them: or had they been enjoined as a command; how hardly should we have thought of our Governor as of a most severe and cruel taskmaster.

But permission being given for vicious inclinations to captivate the Will and darken the understanding, the drunkard quaffs his liquor in jollity and merriment, without thought of the indigestions, the gout, the joint-racking rheums that will ensue; and when the physician has set him up in tolerable order again, he sings Hang sorrow, cast away care, and returns to his old way with full enjoyment; for he has no foreboding of the consequences, nor sees the destruction lurking at the bottom of the bowl. So the battered rake, if nature or medicine can restore him to a little ability, squanders it all away again without reluctance, until he has exhausted all his health and fixed incurable rottenness in all his bones. It is true they both pay dearly for their pleasures; but then they enjoy them while they can, without being

being embittered with any dread or anxiety at what may happen afterwards; and when their excrutiating pains come upon them, they feel no more than the present smart, without doubling it by the regret of having done that which brought it upon them.

Whereas if the miseries they endure be necessary for some services to mankind in general, they must fall somewhere; but were they assigned to the sober provident man, looking always forward upon the present moment, who should be obliged to take the measures knowingly for bringing them upon himself, how much sorer would they press upon him without any mixture even of a transient pleasure? With what reluctance would he swallow the poisonous draught? How grievously would he nauseate the repetition of what he had suffered by severely? with what horror would he enter upon other debaucheries that lead to certain wretchedness and torment? And when the fatal consequences came on, how would he be apt to double their pressure by fretting and repining at so hard a service being imposed upon him? Have we not then reason to be thankful that those are permitted to make themselves examples of suffering whose vicious inclinations prompt them to undertake it willingly, rather than have it forced upon ourselves,

ourselves, to whom it would prove a dismal scene in the prospect, an intolerable burden in the endurance.

22. Thus we may sometimes see how good springs out of evil, and though we cannot see it in most cases, yet we may safely conclude from the character of our heavenly Father, that not a single misfortune or misbehaviour is permitted which does not produce some greater good although to us unknown. But our ignorance for the benefit need not invalidate our conclusion, for we may be sensible the chart of our imagination is defective and scanty: and as a man tracing a river in his map, does not suppose it to have neither source nor discharge, because he sees none within the tract exhibited; so we, when contemplating the courses of events, may conceive there are higher causes and lower ends than those lying within our prospect. Nevertheless, we can hardly extend our thoughts further than the interests of mankind, therefore suppose the evils abounding upon earth tend by some secret way or other to the good order and happiness of this world, or to exercise and prepare men for a better.

As for the sufferings of the next life we know the dread of them is necessary to restrain enormities that could not be discovered nor punished here: yet upon the doc-

trine of the straight gate, the benefit redounding to the few righteous passing through it can scarce be imagined a good at all adequate to compensate for the extremities of torment, whereinto multitudes are hurried by the broad way; neither need we suppose them inflicted in detestation and resentment. For though the wicked have lived in enmity against God, yet he who has shewn us, as well by the Sunshine of his Gospel, as by his candle of reason, that we ought to love our enemies, and forgive injuries, unless where it is necessary for our own security or the public good to animadvert upon them, cannot fail of loving even his enemies, and being willing to extend his mercy to the greatest of sinners, were not their punishment necessary. But external necessity of compulsion there can be none upon him, nor can we deny that if there were none other way, if he were not able to raise up children unto Abraham of the most obdurate stones, yet he might relieve them by annihilation: therefore that he does forbear this relief, must be owing to their suffering being a necessary ground whereout to work some far greater good. But the good can be none to himself, for he reaps no advantage from whatever befals his creatures: whence follows, that it must redound somewhere,

though

though we cannot tell how nor where, among them: and the universe upon the whole contain much greater happiness for this worst of evils, and the wicked courses leading thereinto being permitted, than if they had been prevented.

Yet though we may thus upon occasion extend our imagination a little beyond its ordinary limits with respect to consequences, we cannot do the like with respect to causes: for they lie so complicated in intricate lengths, that we cannot well trace them farther than the depravity of free will, which we must assign for the source of all the wickedness prevailing or that would prevail, if Providence did not continually watch over its motions, and determine which of them it were proper to permit, and which to restrain.

23. Having thus laid out the scene of our imagination in the manner most suitable to its dimensions, we can find no room to suspect God the author of sin: for bare permission no more makes him such, than a magistrate licensing a Book to be printed, makes him author of the composition, or charges him with all the falsities and absurdities that may be contained in it. Neither can we say we are tempted of God, but that we are drawn aside and tempted by our own lusts: for they

being always ready to lead us astray, he has no occasion to tempt us into the evils necessary for bringing forth his gracious purposes, because we shall produce enow of ourselves, and his work remains only to restrain us from those that would have been superfluous. Nor yet can we pretend that his permission authorized us in the wickedness we have committed: for had we forborn, there would not have wanted other sinners to have compleated the requisite measure of iniquity; so that what we have done was done needlessly, and not under his authority. No more can we deem him the approver of our evil deeds, for were he so, he would give them full scope, even where there were no good to be produced out of them: but we see he has discouraged them by the mischiefs and punishments consequent upon them, by the moral senses and faculty of reason he has given us; therefore we must look upon them as odious and detestable in his sight, notwithstanding his permitting them sometimes. As a man may suffer a practice he detests, where the preventing it would be attended with worse inconveniencies; or swallow a medicine he nauseates for the re-establishment of his health, or give it to his children for the like salutary purpose.

Hence it appears that he has established

an

an essential difference in actions, some being made naturally productive of enjoyment, others of suffering: and if he permits some of the latter to take place, it is not that he has altered their nature, but because he purposes to work out a greater good from the mischiefs they engender. As when a man undertakes some very laborious task, it is not that he sees any thing to like in the fatigue, but for the sake of greater advantage he expects to work out thereby. Nor does this contradict what was said before, that when the Lord looked upon all the lines in his plan of Providence, behold they were very good: for as dark and rugged and deformed objects may become beautiful in composition, by setting off the brighter figures of a picture, so what is evil and mischievous may become good in a plan, where the more perfect parts must fall to pieces without it.

24. Nothing we do can in the least either encrease or diminish the happiness of God, either give him joy or vexation, no not for a moment: therefore in philosophical strictness there is nothing either pleasing or displeasing to him; but we take our ideas from our transactions among one another. Men are induced to do kindness by pleasing them, and the contrary upon being displeased; therefore, according to the return we receive at their hands

hands, we judge them pleased or displeased with what we have done: and this judgment we have so frequent occasion to pass that it becomes habitual, and we cannot disjoin the idea of pleasure in the Agent from the acts of kindness ordinarily consequent thereupon. Hence we fall unavoidably into the same apprehensions with respect to God, of whom we can neither think nor speak, otherwise than as being pleased or displeased with actions according to the manner of his treating them. Since then we know that some kinds of behaviour are of a nature to engage his bountiful favour towards us, others to draw down his vengeance upon us, we may justly style the former pleasing and agreeable, the latter displeasing and odious in his sight, because the like follow from either, as would have been brought upon us by a man in whose power we were, upon being pleased or displeased. To attempt to scrutinize how God himself stands affected, would be an idle and useless as well as presumptuous speculation; for his treatment of us being the only thing that concerns us to know, ought to denominate the quality of our actions: and on this respect we shall find an essential difference between them, some having a natural tendency directly opposite to that of others.

God has implanted the desire of happiness

or

or enjoyment in our natures to be the constant spring of our action: appetite first directs to the means of enjoyment, and this is our proper guide so long as we have none other to follow. When reason opens, it discovers the errors of appetite, and points to a distant good lying beyond that of present gratification; this then we are to follow as most beneficial to our interests: yet appetite still deserves our regard in such of her calls as reason declares innocent, for present gratification is a benefit whenever not attended with future inconvenience. But our reason proves dark, narrow, and defective; therefore it behoves us to avail ourselves of the united reason and experience of other persons among whom we converse, or of those that have gone before us: so the rules they have formed are our further direction in matters whereof we cannot fully judge of the expedience, and our habitual attachment as well to rules we have stricken out ourselves, as to those received from good authority, generate the moral senses.

Of rules some are calculated upon observation of the things about us relative to the uses, accommodations, and enjoyments of life: these we style prudential. Others are drawn from the idea of Providence or general government of affairs throughout the world: and these

these point out to us what is pleasing and displeasing to God, that is, what things he has appointed in his disposition of causes to bring good or evil upon us, though we do not clearly understand in what manner or by what media, they produce them. From these last arise our highest moral sense or spirit of Religion, whose notices, where it is pure and genuine, deserve our strictest attention and fullest obedience, as being our surest indication and evidence of a conduct most beneficial to ourselves: and this natural tendency of these rules, though perhaps not particularly discernible by us, is the real foundation whereon they stand. Nor is the case different if there be any given extraordinarily, by other means than human reason or observation, for God wants nothing of us, so can enjoin us nothing but for our benefit: therefore his commands may at the same time be considered as advices of one who perfectly knows the nature of all his works, their mutual relations or dependencies, and what dispositions of mind or courses of behaviour will lead to our greatest advantage.

Thus we see the aim whereto all our guidances conduct us, whether rule, or reason, or appetite, is none other than our good, and we have no cause to esteem any thing good unless recommended as such by one of those ways:

so

so that it would be absurd and unnatural to do what we have cause to believe will end in our damage, although God be able to work out some unknown advantage therefrom; nor have we any warrant or excuse for doing evil that good may come of it.

23. But to prevent mistakes, it is necessary we should understand what is meant by doing evil that good may come of it: for in some senses of evil, it is not only allowable, but obligatory upon us to do it for the good to redound therefrom. For every thing irksome or disgustful to the senses is an evil considered apart in itself, and so any man will judge it: for if he were forced upon some slavish drudgery, or had a nauseous potion poured down his throat, he would esteem it an injury and damage done to him. Therefore whenever we enter upon a toilsome work, or take a dose of physic, it is doing evil that good may come of it: so is every act of self-denial we practise. Nay the very essence of Prudence consists in nothing else, for appetite prompts us fast enough to our immediate good, so the office of Prudence and duty is none other, than to restrain us from this good in prospect of a greater advantage lying beyond.

Nor are there instances wanting even of moral evil being deemed justifiable, such as procuring intelligence of an enemy's counsels by

by bribery, encouraging desertions, enticing away the workmen of persons abroad having invented a new manufacture, publishing rewards for rogues to betray one another. Some righteous people are for conniving at brothels, because, say they, it saves many an innocent creature from destruction: for the vicious will take their course somewhere, and if you do not allow them the commerce of women as vicious as themselves, they will use all their art and industry to seduce the virtuous, or else perhaps turn to a more detestable species of lewdness. It has been laid down as a rule that you must breed up your children to have a little pride of themselves, because this will preserve them from mean company, who would corrupt their morals. And a man may sometimes find it prudent to stir up a less dangerous passion in himself, to assist in overcoming others more pernicious, which he cannot master by the force of reason and resolution.

In all these cases men do, or at least encourage the doing evil, that good may come of it, but then the good to result therefrom is supposed to be known, and the evil necessary for the attainment of it: upon which supposition the evil cannot be called such in common propriety of speech, which estimates actions, according to the whole amount of

the

the consequences taken into contemplation. Therefore by evil is naturally understood whatever our judgment, or rules, or moral senses warn us against as productive of more mischief than advantage upon the whole sequel of its effects: and this evil it would be highly imprudent and foolish to do in expectation that Providence will work out a greater unknown good therefrom. For what is this but giving a reason for running contrary to reason, and laying it down as a rule to act in opposition to all rules? than which nothing can be more preposterous, or inconsistent with itself.

Nor can we pretend a zeal for the glory of God as being manifested in our wickedness: for it is more manifest in our good deeds, which he giveth us both to will and to do. We have cause to glorify his wisdom for the good uses to which he turns the follies and sins of men: but we have the like cause to glorify it, and much greater to glorify his goodness, for the powers and opportunities enabling, the dispositions inclining them to do well; and the successes, sometimes wonderful successes, wherewith he blesses their endeavours in the great advancement of their own happiness thereby, or that of their fellow-creatures. The permission of evil, both natural and moral, is so far from being in itself a topic of

praise,

praise, that it has constantly proved a stumbling block, which we could never get over, if there were not such innumerable instances of provision made for preventing and escaping it, as fully evidence the infinite goodness and perfect holiness of our supreme Governor: and it is from this part of his character we conclude, there is no evil permitted unless necessary to accomplish some gracious and holy purpose. Since then Providence, although sometimes bringing good out of evil, brings it forth more frequently from good; we have a better chance of giving occasion for the divine glory to manifest itself in that unknown benefit which may be worked out from our actions, by doing good than evil.

26. But it is said, offences must needs come. What then? do we know when there is need, or what particular necessity there is for any one of them to come? What though the madness of the times in the grand rebellion has laid the foundation of our liberty: does this justify the parties possessed with it, who could not possibly foresee this happy event, nor had any thing further in view than gratifying their ambition and indulging their angry humours? or is this a reason why we should wish to follow their steps, from which we can see nothing but misery and confusion likely to ensue? Perhaps our constitution

may

may not yet be compleatly perfect, and Providence may have some secret good purpose in view by permitting those torrents of slander and calumny that pour weekly upon our places of public resort. But there is no good discernible by us likely to come of it: for this epidemical distemper of swallowing all kinds of slander with greediness, must render us all in our turns contemptible and odious to one another, which will naturally disable us from acting vigorously against a foreign enemy. For strength consists in unanimity, but what hearty concurrence can there be among people who detest and despise one another?

Therefore it becomes every good patriot to discourage this humour of reviling and vilifying: if we differ in opinion, let us treat one another like reasonable creatures, not like a pack of snarling dogs; and support our own sentiments by calm argumentation, not endeavour to run down all opposers by joining in with the cry of every yelping cur that opens only because he is hungry, or because he has none other way to make himself taken notice of; so upon all other occasions we are to consult our rules and our reason: for they are the proper criteria to distinguish what is needful to be done, or to be omitted. Rectitude of Will consists in a steady adherence to the dictates of understanding, nor can we conceive

conceive it otherwise in God himself: but his intelligence extends to all nature and all futurity, therefore it is no wonder he sees a rectitude and holiness in measures, where we find the contrary.

Whence it follows that we shall imitate him not by doing the same things that he has permitted, but by following the same guidance, to wit, the line of our intelligence; for so does he too follow his intelligence, only his is boundless, whereas ours stands confined within the narrow compass of reason and information, that he has vouchsafed us. Within this compass then we are to look for his declared Will, which alone we are to obey, for all else belongs to the secret Will, which can be no rule to us, because founded upon knowledge it is impossible for us to fathom; and to attempt to meddle in matters he has reserved to his own disposal, would be the most consummate impudence, and daring presumption.

For God alone, who discerns the remotest issues of things, can know what evils are capable of being turned to good purposes, and how to set bounds to iniquity that it overflow not too far: therefore the permission of evil is a branch of the divine prerogative, not to be encroached upon without sacrilege. Such encroachment is like touching the ark of God with

with unhallowed hands, from which nothing could be expected but certain destruction. For what can be more arrogant and impious, than doing wickedly to find employment for Providence? It is the same as saying to God, I will do all the mischief I can: now do thou produce good out of it. This seems to exceed the rebellion of Lucifer, for he sought only to make himself independent on the Almighty: whereas the sinner transgressing upon this pretence would make God his Servant, by setting him at pleasure to clean away his dirty work, or turn it into sweetness and salubrity.

27. Nor perhaps would men ever find temptation to do evil that good may come of it, if they were apprized what kind of good may be expected therefrom; for it is not their own good, but that of other creatures. They flatter themselves with a notion that because God has permitted their evil, he must be pleased with it, and will reward them accordingly; whereas we have shewn, he may permit a thing he is displeased with, and consequently the perpetrator can look for nothing else than to feel the effects of his displeasure: but he permits the sin, because he foresees the mischiefs consequent upon it will work out some signal advantages to his creatures. Would men consider the matter in this light, which is the true one, they would not be so fond of

running

running themselves into misery for the sake of some unknown profit to redound therefrom to others.

They do not act so in their temporal concerns, though there are the same grounds for running counter to common Prudence as duty: for we trust that all the diseases and distresses of life have their secret uses, or else they would not be permitted, for our gracious Governor is able to deliver us from them all, and would do it but for that reason. Yet who ever purposely ruins his health, or throws away his fortune, because Providence will not suffer these misfortunes to befal needlessly, nor without producing a greater benefit to mankind therefrom? How much more absurd then would it be, to incur miseries to whose intenseness and duration we can set no bounds, because there are reasons to be given that they would not be inflicted, unless necessary to secure the happiness of other Beings, and because the universe upon the whole is better with them than without them? Such service is not required at our hands: Moses was rebuked for desiring that the wrath of God might be turned upon himself from the Israelites; and certainly the offer was made inconsiderately, for such romantic zeal for the public good is not in human nature, nor was any man ever really actuated

tuated by it, whatever he might persuade himself.

Nothing is more deceitful than the heart of man, or more difficult for him to discover than his own true springs of action: there are many latent motives which prompt us without our perceiving them, many plausible colourings that claim to be the sources of motions we had before determined upon. Nor can an observant by-stander fail of seeing that when men do wrong, there is always some private passion, or interest, or ill humour, or perverseness of temper leading them thereto which they are unwilling to acknowledge, and then, if they have been plunged deep in enthusiastic notions, they raise this idle pretence to an extravagant sanctity in sinning for the divine glory, to cast a glare for blinding their own conscience, or more commonly to cover their contempt of the divine authority from the world. Thus while they would seem to be labouring after an unknown remote good, beyond all reach of human sagacity or foresight to find out, they are in reality pursuing present gratification in disregard of a good that their judgment, their moral sense, or their conscience might make manifest; in which indulgence of the cravings of appetite, or inordinate desire, the very essence of depravity and unholiness consists.

28. I have been the more prolix and particular upon this Article, because having spoken of an universal Providence extending to all events, whether fortunate or disastrous, and appointing or permitting all the actions of men, whether good or evil, occasion might be taken from hence to imagine them all equally pleasing to God, and alike the proper objects of our endeavours: which being a most dangerous and fatal error, subversive of Religion, morality, and even common prudence, it seemed more excusable to be redundant, than wanting in the cares taken to obviate it. But this poisonous fruit is not now very common, as growing from an injudicious intenseness of thought upon the manner of the divine government; a root but little abounding at this season. For easiness and indolence of temper seems the prevailing humour; men's thoughts being commonly taken up with the amusement of the day, or of the hour, unless perhaps when ambition, or covetousness, or some other darling passion engages them a little further. A few transient ideas of a general Providence content them, without troubling themselves to examine particularly by what channels the administration of it is carried on; whereby they luckily escape the danger of scrutinizing further than their lights would enable them to do it safely.

As

As far as appears among our cotemporaries they never sin upon principle, nor with any more distant view than indulgence of the passion that happens to come uppermost, unless there be some who seriously hold the methodistical doctrine, That a man must be in a state of damnation before he can enter a state of salvation; from which naturally follows, that he should make himself damnably wicked as fast as he can, that he may have the quicker passage into righteousness. But these gentry, having an utter detestation of all human reasonings, are not likely to meddle with my speculations: so that what is offered above will be superfluous to the generality, who may therefore skim it lightly over, as they do most other things put into their hands, except it be a lampoon or a piece of scandal.

But as there are persons who bestow more thoughts than common upon the courses of events throughout the world, it was my business to provide for what difficulties I could imagine might arise in their minds; more especially to guard on all sides against whatever ill consequences might be drawn from things I had advanced myself. Therefore if there be any to whom the positions maintained in the Chapters of Providence and Free-will, or in several other places shall prove a stumbling-block, as seeming to make God the

author of sin, and to encourage immortality by representing it alike productive of good with the strictest virtue, the endeavours here used for removing that imputation are intended for their service; whereto it is hoped they may prove effectually conducive, provided so much more than the fashionable attention be given them, as might be expected from persons who may have any doubt arising upon a point of the utmost importance.

29. But as the imaginations of men are formed upon very different scales, not all equally capacious, those conceptions which are exoteric and wholesome to some, will still remain esoteric and dangerous to others. But it is of no avail to our Maker what we think of him or of his works, nor does he require any thing of us either in thought or deed, unless for our own good: therefore we serve him best when we think of both in the manner best adapted to our own respective uses Such as have the fullest idea of the divine Government and fatherly tenderness, may look upon an event happening as a certain evidence of its being the Will of God; and best that it should happen: therefore not only the misfortunes and troubles befaling in the World, the wicked deeds perpetrated by others, but even the follies they have committed themselves, may be matter of no discontent

content to them; being persuaded that all these things will turn out to some greater advantage, or else they would not have been suffered. Yet though they are not sorry at what has happened, they may be sorry that it should have been necessary to happen; which sentiment will urge them sufficiently to avoid the like whenever they do not see that necessity, that is in every thing future lying within their power: for the evidence alleged of evils being best, belongs only to those already past and done, which manifests the sacred Will in those instances.

So that notwithstanding their resignation under the faults they have been permitted to do, they will strive against them for the future, as earnestly as they could without such acquiescence, and be ready to join heartily in that petition, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. By which must be meant the apparent Will: for the secret is already done throughout every region of the universe on earth, as completely as it is in heaven. Nor is there any thing in the nature of this contented temper, rightly considered, to abate our vigilance over our future conduct. What if a man upon having a stone fall upon his head, should believe it happened for the best? nobody would think this a reason why he should put himself in the way of another stone,

stone, or forbear to take the proper caution for preventing the like accident again. So although upon have offended once he should suppose it happened for the best because permitted, yet if he judges soundly, he can draw no reason in the world from thence why he should offend a second time, or should not take warning from his first failure, to guard against the temptations that led him thereinto.

30. But I fear such soundness of judgment is not common, nor perhaps possible to be fully attained: therefore an easiness under the reflection of past misconduct cannot be generally recommended with safety. For our desires naturally flow from our likings: according as things have affected us formerly we are apt to desire and endeavour the repetition of them, and uneasiness at what we have done is the strongest spring to drive us into a contrary conduct. So it will be best to cultivate a vexation at the evil committed by ourselves and an abhorrence against it elsewhere: provided we can disjoin the offender from the offence, so as to love the one while we detest the other. This we do easily in our own case, for we do not hate and detest ourselves how much soever convinced of having grossly misbehaved, from hence we may learn to do it in the case of our neighbour.

The

The Romish doctors reckon three stages in the passage from vice to virtue: Attrition, Contrition, and Repentance. The first is a sorrow for the mischiefs men have brought upon their own heads by their ill doings; the second a sorrow for the doings themselves, and the last a thorough change of mind or hearty disposition to practise them no more. There may be some perhaps so happily constituted as to find the two former needless, being able to begin directly with the last. It is not difficult in the common affairs of life, where there is no strong passion or habit in the way: a man upon finding some practice he has followed a little inconvenient to his health or his fortune, may take warning from thence to leave it off without a violent regret at what he has done. But to attain a perfect unconcernedness at every thing past, yet without being a whit the less careful of his measures for the future, is more plausible in theory, than feasible in practice.

On the other hand, there are persons of so little sensibility that, though they smart severely for their follies, the moment the smart is over they think no more of it than if nothing had ever happened amiss. With these people it is necessary to begin at the first stage: for till you can bring them to carry their reflections a little beyond the present feeling,

feeling, you will never work upon them at all.

But for the most part contrition is the proper entrance into the way of amendment, and the more hearty the sorrow, the more effectually and speedily it will forward us on the way. Nor is the detestation of vice of little avail to help us in our progress, for what we have been used to look upon with odium, will be more apt to grieve us when falling upon ourselves: therefore censure when properly applied is serviceable, not only as a species of punishment for the wicked, but as a preservative for the good. But though the aversion ought to terminate in the practice without extending to the practiser, when the separation is possible, yet I fear it is not every body that can make it. For the vulgar, little used to distinguish further than their senses or their passions can guide them, judge of things in the lump: if they like the person, every thing he does must be right; if once persuaded of any thing wrong in him, he must be capable of all that is bad.

I suppose it is upon this principle that our party-leaders have encouraged the ridiculing and aspersing one another's characters, even upon topics no ways relative to the matters in contest: for the mob being no judges of those matters cannot estimate the man by his measures,

measures, but the measures by the man; therefore the fixing an ill impression of the one, is thought the most effectual method of giving them a distaste for the other. Whether this method be justifiable, or not carried to greater lengths than necessary, I leave to others to determine; as likewise whether the justifiableness of it be considered at all, or only the gratification of resentment, ill-humour, or selfish desires. But with regard to heinous enormities, especially such as may prove contagious, one must not be too rigorous with persons of gross apprehension, in requiring them to distinguish between the vice and the vicious: because if you will not allow them to detest the offender, they will be apt to think lightly of the offence, whereby they may fall into great hazard of being infected by it,

This may account for those cruel severities the Israelites were taught to exercise upon their corrupt and idolatrous neighbours, for they seem to have had little rational or refined in their religion, but were altogether guided by appearances and sensitive ideas: and with such there is no medium, they must either love, or hate to extravagance.

Therefore if they had been allowed to intermingle among idolaters, or even to treat them with common humanity, they would have

have taken a liking to their follies; and there was no way of securing them against the contagion, unless by raising an utter aversion to the persons infected, and a persuasion that no usage could be too bad for them to receive. But even the populace of our times are not quite so gross and stony; they can detest a vile profligate enough to make them abhor his practices, without wishing to knock out his brains: so they may be restrained from giving such terrible proofs of their righteousness, without endangering the loss of it.

Yet the ideas to be infused into them must be accommodated to the size and shape of the vessel; for it is in vain to think of making men perfect at once, or inspiring them with better sentiments than they are capable of bearing: a mistake your very righteous people often fall upon, to the disppointment of their own purpose, and great detriment of those they take in hand. But as the husbandman studies the nature of his soils as well as of his seeds, so whoever would sow the seeds of virtue, must observe diligently the characters and apprehensions of the recipients striving to improve them in those particulars where an improvement may be made: for the same step may be an advance in one man which would be going backward in another.

Therefore

Therefore discretion must be used, and no easy matter it will prove, to discern what is an approach towards holiness in each person, according to his situation, keeping it always in aim to bring him by practicable gradations to an universal benevolence even to the worst of men, so as to shew them all the kindness that may not prove an encouragement to vice, or endanger mischief to himself: in imitation of that power who causeth his sun to shine upon the good and upon the evil, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust; and we trust will turn every evil permitted, to answer some good and holy purpose.

31. Having now explained my notions of the esoteric and exoteric doctrines in the clearest and fullest manner I was able, I hope they will appear upon a careful and candid examination to be the same in substance varying only in language (Permission being used instead of Provision, or as I may say, the latter being translated by the former;) and in the method of laying out our objects according to the scene beheld in our imagination. When withdrawn from the hurrry of sensible objects we give the full stretch to contemplation, we may then survey the divine economy from beginning to end, and though

though our views will still be very short and imperfect with respect to particulars, yet we may clearly discern so much as to see, that all events must be determined by their proper adequate causes, these again by others prior from whence they were generated, and so on without interruption until we find their source in the immediate acts of the Almighty: whose omniscience will not suffer us to imagine he performs any without knowing, or without thinking what they will produce in the remotest or minutest consequences. Whence follows the absolute dominion of Providence; nothing ever happening that was not noticed and marked down in the original plan. We may then turn round to the other side of the prospects and perceive that events do not terminate in what we discern or feel of them, but draw on further consequences depending upon one another in an endless succession: by which we may understand how every line in the plan of Providence, however appearing otherwise in some particular links of the chain, may be drawn in wisdom and goodness for promoting the advantage of the creatures. Upon this view it will appear that God is righteous in all his works, gracious and holy in all his doings, the very provisions made for

for physical and moral evil being calculated for encreasing the sum of happiness and holiness throughout the universe.

From this idea of universal Providence we may learn to conduct ourelves within our own little province: for such we have in the administration of affairs, by means of the power and free-will allotted us. Nor does the divine dominion destroy our freedom; for freedom has no concern with antecedent causes, nor the provisions giving them birth, but solely with the force or restraint there might be upon our future volitions and actions; and experience convinces us that we have a certain scope to range in, exempt from such force or restraint. Within this compass then it behoves us, if I may be pardoned the expression, to lay our plan of Providence in imitation of the most perfect model: drawing our lines, so far as our best judgment can extend them, with a view to produce the greatest good, upon their whole length, to our fellow-creatures or ourselves, that can be effected upon every particular occasion. And because we are liable to inordinate passions too strong for judgment to overpower, it is incumbent upon us to endeavour after a holiness of temper, exempt from malice or envy, or sensuality, or selfishness, or indolence, which

which might draw us aside from the prosecution of our plan.

But as a traveller, while passing along the road, must observe the tracks before him and keep his eye attentive to the objects near at hand, nor can stand to gaze at the distant horizon: so we, when occupied in the common business of life, cannot retain the whole extent of our contemplative scenes in mind. We then find our prospect reduced to scantier limits; the chains of causes appear broken short; nature, chance, and free-will, seem original sources of events; and though there may still remain a general idea of Providence, we cannot trace it up to its first appointments, but it presents to our view a superintending power, continually guiding the motions of second causes by fresh and occasional operations, though when or how the touch is given we cannot perceive. In this partial scene of things we have other sources to assign for all the evils that happen, so it becomes us to ascribe the good alone to Providence, together with the purpose of producing further good out of the evils permitted. Yet permission is no sanction or encouragement, but wickedness still remains the object of vengeance and displeasure to God, who has nothing unholy in his nature: therefore we cannot

cannot make ourselves more agreeable to him than by labouring, so far as our imperfections will allow, to imitate his holiness.

32. Thus we see the two systems, though proceeding by different routs, conduct to one and the same end, namely; to give us the purest idea of our Governor, and most heavenly disposition of mind we are capable of attaining. But if we go to blend them together, it will utterly spoil our work; which then can answer no end at all, unless to involve us in doubt and perplexity. It will be like joining the halves of two maps cast upon different scales, from whence nothing but incoherence and absurdity can ensue: there will be rivers pointing their course against mountains, private gardens bigger than the adjacent country, and streets of cities leading into the sea. It may be presumed that all the difficulties, started against the ways of Providence, arise from this motley mixture of gross and refined notions; for there are people too shrewd to rank among the vulgar, yet too dull ever to become adepts: these operators are perpetually mingling the strokes of one system among the other, whereby they make neither uniform, but mangle them both, and in this condition it is no wonder they appear distorted and disfigured.

For

For if we behold the vulgar scheme with the glass of contemplation, we shall find it abounding in inconsistencies; effects without a cause; free will acting upon no inducement; all things guided by wisdom, yet for the most part depending upon contingencies; the power of God irresistible, yet many things done contrary to his Will; nothing hidden from his sight, yet innumerable trifling and filthy objects unbecoming his regard; Providence ever watchful over events yet permitting those to take effect, which were not intended, nor approved. These the plain man does not perceive, for he takes his ideas singly, so discerns not the discordance that would be found upon comparing them together: or if a difficulty occurs, he can acquiesce without expecting to solve it, being sensible of his ignorance, and satisfied that many things may be true, though to him appearing unaccountable.

On the other hand, if we investigate the chain of causes to the fountain head, without turning the opposite way to consider what consequences may ensue beyond our immediate notice, we shall still retain our vulgar idea of terminating all events in the uses of man; and then our reference of them to the divine appointment will have a mischievous effect, representing many provi-

sions.

sions therein as trifling, unkind, and unholy.

Nevertheless, every science must have a beginning, nor can one expect to rise from the popular system, at a leap: in the interim of our progress there will arise doubts and difficulties, for these are ordinarily the avenues to knowledge. Yet they will not discompose us so long as we bear in mind that we are but learners, for this reflection will satisfy, that we are not fully masters of any point that may seem to cast an imputation upon Providence. For when we consider, that unholiness, by the essence of it, must proceed from some passion, or selfishness, or intemperance of mind, we shall lay it down as a fundamental principle, that nothing of this sort can have place in the most perfect; and shall esteem it the nearest approach towards perfection, to cultivate the opposite character in ourselves.

33. But then let us not suffer the desire of holiness to carry us beyond the bounds of discretion, nor mislead us in judging wherein its essence consists: an error that men of no small credit among the multitude have fallen into. For they observing justly that study, meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and the externals of Religion, are the main supports of holiness, place the whole of it in them;

so would have men think of nothing else, but employ every day and every hour of the day in a continual round of these exercises. Whereas holiness does not consist in them, but in the disposition of mind to be contrasted by them, which disposition is better forwarded by the life and spirit of our devotions, than by the length or frequency of them.

For it is not in human nature to keep up a glow of fervency further than to a certain period, according to the strength and present condition of our organs: all beyond is perfunctory and unavailing form, no more a nourishment to the mind than eating beyond one's appetite is a nourishment to the body. Besides that the practice of a rational and useful life is equally, if not more necessary to strengthen our sentiments: for obedience is better than sacrifice, and infixes the principle, whereon it was performed, deeper than any mental efforts can do. Nor would it be more absurd for a soldier to desert his post that he may lie lurking about his General's tent, lest he should lose his reverence by losing sight of him, than for us to neglect our active duties, that we may attend more closely to those of devotion.

It is not by such exercises alone that we can imitate the most perfect models: God himself not only receives the adorations of

Angels

Angels and Men, but likewise feeds the young ravens and cloaths the lilies of the field. We have offered reasons to make it probable, that the blessed spirits above do not spend their whole time in empty Hallelujahs, but are continually employed on high behests to assist in administering the courses of nature, and fortune. And God has placed us under a necessity of attending to sensible objects for the support and convenience of ourselves and our fellow-creatures. Let us then in all our measures have a respect to their use, and practise religious exercises so far as they tend to give us a happy turn of mind, dependant, on Providence, contented with its dispensations, and pleased with being under its protection: and make us industrious within our narrow sphere of action to maintain the order and promote the happiness of the world wherewith we stand connected.

Perfection is not to be attained without attending carefully to all branches of the duty allotted us: but he that aims only at one point commonly overshoots his mark; nor is it unusual for men to become unholy, through an intemperate zeal of being holy. It gives them narrow notions of the supreme Being, as receiving actual delight from their services, and uneasily anxious to have them

paid; it keeps them inexpert in their business, and useless in their stations, makes them morose and rancorous against those whom they suppose the enemies of heaven, fills them with spiritual pride and contempt of mankind; puts them out of humour with the world about them, with the condition of their own nature; and overwhelms them with despondencies at their not attaining impracticable lengths. So that there is such a thing as being too pious, where the piety is not rational and genuine, and the greater lengths it runs, so much the worse: as a man, whose money is in counterfeit coin, the more he has of it, will only find it the greater toil and burden.

CHAP. VI.

THINGS PROVIDENTIAL.

TO what purpose, it may be asked, do we make these the subject of a particular enquiry: or what can be expected from the title of this chapter, more than we have already descanted upon in our Chapter on Providence?

Providence? we have there shewn that all things derive their essence, and all events their accomplishment, from that source: that small as well as great, the veriest trifles equally with the most momentous concerns, were comprised within the original plan. The groveling earth-worm, the worthless sea-weed, the dirt we trample upon, were works of the same hand that made the human soul with all her powers of intelligence, with all her stores of science and accomplishment. The crawling of emmets and falling of leaves were contained in the same scheme wherein were projected the rise of empires, and the exact period of their continuance. A sparrow no more falls to the ground than a kingdom is overthrown, a bubble no more burts than a world is dissolved: not an atom stirs throughout the material universe, nor a fancy starts up in the imagination of any animal, without the knowledge and attention, without the permission or appointment, of our almighty and all-provident Governor. Even the wild rovings of chance took their rise from certain causes, and circumstances occasioning them to proceed in that manner; which flowed successively from prior causes, through channels whose sources were first opened by Omnipotence, with full intelligence of whatever

was

was done, and clear foresight of all the minutest consequences that should result therefrom.

From whence it may be inferred the epithet Providential was superfluous, all things being such without exception, nor is there any room for a distinction between events that are providential, and others that are not. But notwithstanding the universal dependence of events upon certain causes provided in wisdom for bringing them respectively forth, it does not follow that the epithet providential, applied to distinguish some of them from the rest, must be an insignificant term. For we have seen before, that derivatives do not always carry the whole extent of their primitives: every thing done for one's self is not a selfish act, nor is a man, a whit the more selfish for taking an honest and prudent care of his own concerns. In like manner neither is every thing denominated Providential, that proceeds from the hand of Providence, but such works only wherein there are marks of that hand discernible by human understanding. Thus it appears the epithet we have now taken under consideration, is a term belonging to the exoteric language; having no force in describing the real nature of things, but the

appearance

appearance of them in our narrow comprehensions.

"To discern the system of Providence completely, we ought to know the precise quantity of good the creatures are capable of receiving, and quantity of evil necessary to support that good; what else besides good, but consistent with it may be contained in the general design; the various states of perceptive Beings, according to their situation with respect to one another or to matter; the several compositions and organizations of material substance, together with the secondary qualities and essences resulting therefrom; their positions, and that of their component parts; the motions both external and internal among them; their mutual operations, and extent of their influence upon one another; the effects as well immediate as remote of their action, and tendency of it through successive channels to accomplish the purpose intended. But this we may see at first glance is an immense ocean of science unnavigable by human sagacity: should we attempt to compass it, we should find ourselves bewildered in the multitude of objects, and intricacy of causes depending upon one another, in a line further than our eye could stretch to; and by endeavouring

deavouring to grasp the whole scheme of Providence should quite lose our idea of it, and see nothing but inextricable confusion.

2. Therefore it behoves us to select such parts of the scene before us, as we can draw upon the scanty scale of our imagination, so as to discern the objects clearly, and trace out their mutual dependencies. Nor need we fear doing an injury to the glory of God by this partial consideration of his works: for that advances it best which manifests it most fully to us. He wants not glory from us for his own benefit or amusement, but because a strong and well-grounded apprehension of his Providence would fill us with satisfaction of mind, at being constantly under a gracious protection, that will guard us from every evil unproductive of greater advantage: and is the main basis both of prudence and benevolence, by ensuring to us, that whatever we do well, shall be attended with success either in present or in futurity, and making the good of our fellow-creatures to be our own interest.

But it has been seen in the foregoing Chapters that, as our organs of imagination are constituted, it would be mischievous to refer every thing to the divine appointment. An intelligence extending to all minutest events together with their remotest consequences, is an idea

idea much too large for our comprehension: no man can conceive the possibility of it, how well soever his reason may convince him of the fact. And there are some trivial and unsightly objects, which to join in the same thought with our supreme Governor, would give us unworthy notions of him, and lessen our sense of his purity, his Majesty, and his Holiness. This being the case, it is allowable and commendable, because necessary and expedient, for us to confine our ideas to second causes, where we cannot trace them satisfactorily to the first.

Some effects we see by experience proceed regularly from the primary properties of bodies, or their secondary qualities resulting from texture and organization: others follow upon their application to one another, without our knowing what brought them together: others again are the product of voluntary action. These three then, Nature, Chance, and Freewill, we are justified in regarding upon common occasions as original springs of events, because for the most part we want largeness of view to discern their dependance upon higher sources. They are all the causes giving birth to the phenomena falling under our observation: but among them we find visible footsteps of a choice, and contrivance, that requires another cause

to

to account for it. For nature operates necessarily; chance works at random without preference of one thing above another, and though voluntary Agents proceed upon an idea of something they are about to do, yet we see them sometimes acting with a wisdom not their own, towards the accomplishment of a design they had not in their thoughts.

Whatever therefore bears the marks of a wisdom not belonging to the known causes producing it, we may properly style Providential; which term being applied to things, not in respect of their real essence, but of their appearance in our eyes, must of course be relative to particular persons; that being providential to one man which is not so to another, according to their respective understanding and lights. Nevertheless, there are some things appearing obviously so to every eye that will cast an attentive look upon them, and are rather unheeded than unseen by the generality of mankind. These lucid spots of our prospect, wherein the Image of Wisdom and Providence stands reflected, we shall take for the subject of our present enquiry.

3. And it is by this reflected Image that the very being of a God is most commonly manifested. We have attempted other proofs of

of his existence in the last volume drawn from the locality, the numbers, the different properties, of all substances falling under our notice, which could not exist in that manner necessarily or of themselves, and therefore require a First cause to assign their several stations, essences, and qualities. But this kind of argumentation is of too abstracted a nature to serve for common use, as requiring a particular preparation, and stretch of the faculties to pursue it without losing the track. Most men, and perhaps all men upon most occasions, content themselves with the three causes mentioned in the preceding section, without looking forward for any farther sources from whence their powers of operation were derived. But when they behold them working with an art and contrivance that is not in their nature, when they see necessity, casualty, and ignorance, bringing excellent schemes to perfection: this at once convinces them of a superior intelligence, which requires no nice investigation of causes to discover. For when Agents void of Wisdom act wisely, it is plain there must be some hand to conduct them; though we may not be able to perceive by what springs or channels of communication it operates.

So that here wants no long train of reasoning

ing to lead us into the knowledge of a Providence. Penetration and closeness of thought have no farther use in this case than to discover the fallacy of those sophisms wherewith persons of a perverse subtilty of refinement have overclouded the most apparent truths. The plain man needs no assistance here from the speculatist, but may say to him as Diogenes did to Alexander, Only please to stand out of my Sun-shine. Let him but observe the phenomena before him, and he may leave them to work their own effect upon his imagination: it is his part to take care they do not pass without his Notice, for while remaining unheeded, they can work no effect at all; and if not fixed in the remembrance, their effect will be but transitory, and unprofitable. If he has not been used to look upon these objects, he will do well to begin with those he finds most striking, and apt to raise an admiration in his mind: for admiration is an affection or gentler kind of passion, and the force of passion is necessary to rouze up an habitual insensibility; as physicians cure a palsy by raising a fever.

Extraordinary phenomena, and effects requiring the concurrence of many causes to produce them, affect us most strongly; nor can admiration keep up her glow without fresh

fresh fuel to be supplied by new objects occurring, or at least such as are new to our observance; for when once grown familiar they lose their efficacy upon us. When the Moon interposes between us and the Sun so as to cover his whole Body, it sets every eye agape, because happening but once or twice in an age: but that total eclipse of the Sun of many hours continuance, varying the employments of life, made every night by the interposition of our own earth, raises emotion in nobody; for this very reason, because it happens every night. The common air we breathe gives us no thought of Providence because it is so common, lying ready at the lips of every animal in plenty enough, and to spare, for the uses of them all: but our food and cloathing, being not so copiously dispersed nor obtruded upon us everywhere, make us more attentive to that admirable provision of materials, enabling us to procure them by our care and industry.

Yet though it be expedient to vary our objects of contemplation, it is not so to crowd them too thick: for then they will have no better effect, than if they had not been varied at all. When one reads Derham's physico-theology, the mind is tired with the multiplicity of proofs, which rather overwhelm and benumb the faculty of admiration, than excite

excite it: a short general description of the human mechanism, with a few of the most curious parts would perhaps have answered the purpose more effectually, than that elaborate treatise. For it is not enough to consider the justness and weight of our evidence, without consulting likewise the capacity and present disposition of the mind, that is to receive it: for the most wholsome aliments crammed immediately will bring on a heaviness instead of enlivening, and the most palatable will nauseate when the appetite is not set towards them. It is a vulgar saying, that one man may lead a Horse to water, but twenty men cannot make him drink: therefore we shall succeed best by watching favourable seasons, such as after an escape from some imminent danger, when the mind is most susceptible of impression, and applying the objects we find most suitable to our temper, as striking most forcibly upon us.

It is a too common mistake, among persons of a pious turn, to take their opinion of things providential from their teachers: the reality of a Providence they may reasonably take upon the credit of others of larger understanding, and undoubted integrity, though it is better if they can be brought to see it themselves, and for that purpose they are exorted

exorted to observe things passing providentially around them. But Providential, as has been observed already, does not imply what derives from the hand of Providence, but what carries an evidence of that original, in visible marks upon it: now nothing can be evidence to him who does not discern the force of it with his own eyes. Therefore when things are propounded as providential, let a man examine impartially and courageously whether he feels them operate as such upon his imagination: if he does not, they are not providential to him.

'To pretend ourelves convinced of the divine government upon reasons that do not appear valid in our judgment, is a mockery of God and a deception of ourselves: for they will never strengthen our sense of his dominion, the only good fruit expected from them. Our duty is not to make reasons but to search for them, and inculcate such as we find most cogent upon our memory. Nevertheless, though every man must weigh his evidence himself, another may point out the sources from whence it is to be fetched, and prepare it for the scale: to which service we shall now endeavour to lend our helping hand by some few observations that may tend to promote it. For we do not mean to enumerate the evidences of a superintending guidance: this

this would take up more of our time and labour, than we can spare from other matters, and has already been done sufficiently, as well by divines as philosophers: we only purpose to make some more general observations without regarding whether they be new, or have been made by others before.

4. All effects lying within the reach of our notice were the produce of nature, chance, or free-will: which three therefore are the fields we have to survey. But works performed by the contrivance and industry of man afford us no marks of a superior intelligence, his own power and sagacity being sufficient for their production: yet if we consider his powers of action, the talents of his understanding, the materials he has to work with, none of which he made for himself, we must refer them to the gift of nature: if the circumstances concurring to furnish him with opportunities and motives for acting, the purposes whereto he co-operates, different or even contrary to those he had in view, we must acknowledge chance to have a great share in his proceedings. Wherefore voluntary agency, so far as we have concern with it at present, becomes absorbed into the other two, leaving nature and chance alone for the subject of our examination.

Intelligence is manifested two ways, either by

by means supplied to answer the end we may conceive to have been had in view, though we do not discern the methods by which they were prepared; or else by the contrivance apparent in productions, though we do not see what end they answer: the former more particularly gives us the display of Providence, the latter of the wisdom wherewith it is administered. But where we can discern both the art and the uses it serves, the evidence is double, and if well attended to must strike with double force upon the mind. Our own pleasure and profit being ever uppermost in our thoughts, whatever contributes to the general convenience and accommodation of human life, wherein we may have a share, is most apt to draw our attention: therefore the good and well being of mankind is the end we can most readily conceive to have been had in view, and the means conducing thereto will be easiest received as evidence of a provident care and concern in supplying them.

As to the brute creation, it is customary to despise them as below the divine regard, yet if there be a man so singularly open hearted as to deem them, too, and such enjoyments as they are capable of, worth a thought of that power who can think of every thing without neglecting any thing, he will have a larger field of Providence before him, and

find evidences, wanting to other people. Nevertheless, if we will not allow them to deserve concern for their own sakes, still since many of them are subservient and necessary to our uses, we may look upon the provisions made for their preservation as a remoter means promoting our favourite end. And with respect to insects, and other animals seeming wholly useless, we may discern a contrivance in the methods provided for their breeding and sustenance, though we should not be sensible of any good purpose answered thereby.

5. If we saw a house stored with furniture, utensils, and victuals, the gardens planted with herbs and fruit-trees, the grounds stocked with cows, horses, poultry, and deer, all in a manner fitted for the entertainment and convenience of a family; we should certainly conclude there was some master, who had taken care to provide these supplies for the uses whereto they were respectively proper. Or if an ignorant person went into a room where among scales, weights, compasses, measures, and other things of common use, he should find quadrants, parallel rulers, theodolites, and armillary spheres, of which he had no notion what they were good for, nor could understand the figures upon them: yet he might know without telling, that these

were

were the works of some artificer proceeding with skill and contrivance, who made them for purposes well worth the care he had bestowed upon them.

In this manner we constantly reason upon common occasions, and there wants only the proper attention to lead us into the like train of thinking upon the phenomena of visible nature. For there we may perceive ample provision made in vast variety for the numerous family of Adam. Corn, fruits, pulse, herbs, cattle, and fowl for our sustenance; wool and flax for our cloathing; drugs and simples for our relief; air for our breathing; timber, stone, lime, and brick-earth for our habitation; wood and coal for our firing; beasts of burden for our assistance: winds to purify our atmosphere, to refresh our heats, and waft us from shore to shore; variety of soils and climates to bear us a produce of every kind; dews and rains to make them yield us their encrease. The sea, that original source of water so necessary to us for many uses, serves likewise to associate distant nations by opening the communication of commerce. The Sun diffuses his warmth and light to cherish us: the Moon helps to lessen our darkness, and the tides she raises assist our navigation. The distant stars guide us over the boundless ocean, and inhospitable

desert, extend the fields of science to an immensity of space, and turn the rugged brow of night into a cheerful scene of contemplation.

Even within the narrow compass of our own bodies, we carry about no inconsiderable stores, without which we could not receive benefit from those without us. We have engines of digestion and secretion, springs and channels of circulation, limbs for instruments of action, bones for our support and protection, organs of speech for our mutual intercourse. We have appetites to stimulate, senses to inform, the faculties of remembering, comparing, distinguishing, judging, to enlighten, and reason to direct us. Neither do we want sources of enjoyment and pleasure, either in the capacity of our senses and affections of joy, hope, admiration, and innocent mirth to receive them, or the plentiful supply of external objects fitted to give them.

And among those of nature's productions wherein we do not find our immediate account, we may yet see a variety and regularity of disposition that must be the effect of design and consummate skill to conduct it. The four elements though formed out of the same matter, yet have severally so stable a constitution, that they can mingle perpetually without

without changing into one another; and by their different commixtures produce other secondary elements, as salts fixed and volatile, acids, alkalies, spirits of different kinds; which being mingled together in suitable proportions generate all the grosser bodies we see and handle. By this wonderful join-work the stores of nature are supplied in an endless multiplicity of species, having their several essences distinguishing them apart, hard or soft, compact or loose, dry or humid, elastic, flexible, unyielding, glutinous, fluid, or coherent.

The earth contains within her bowels abundance of soils, stones, fossils, minerals, metals, ductile, malleable, fusible, brittle, or liquid, and disposes the parts of her diamonds and her chrystals with such an amazing artifice, as that though some of the compactest substances, yet they afford an easy passage for the light to traverse through them in all directions. The air sustains vapours of opposite qualities, aqueous, nitrous, and inflammable; some to fall in dews and rains, some to bind up the hail, the snow, and hoar frost, and some to dart in lightnings and meteors. Water serves for the basis of many liquors, varying according to the channels through which it passes, whether the strata of earth, or little vessels of fruits and plants, or secretory

tory ducts of animals. Fire performs the twofold office of giving heat and light: by the former it operates diversly in baking, melting, consolidating, dissipating, or evaporating; in the latter it appears under seven principal forms besides the multitudes of colours made of them by composition, and it seems to be the principle giving activity to hot seeds, and drugs, and spirituous liquors.

Then if we turn our eyes upon the vegetable tribes, we may see them, in countless multitudes of trees, shrubs, weeds, mosses, funguses, cover the ground or produced in the water: each growing, spreading, and flourishing by peculiar laws adapted to its own kind, and all worked in such exactness and nicety of art, as the greatest human ingenuity could not imitate: their sap vessels curiously bound up together within the stem, or dispersed among the roots and branches, their leaves wrought much finer than needlework, their flowers of many different makes, hues, and odours, their seed diversly produced, lodged, and constituted, and their several parts having different tastes or qualities dependent upon their internal texture.

Yet are these wonders of the vegetative world surpassed by those of the animal, whose frame contains a more complicated machinery capable of more admirable play: for besides the

the engines of growth and nutriment analagous in both, the latter are furnished with organs of sensation, and instruments of activity, enabling them to remove from place to place, and make their uses of things lying within their reach. Nor do they less display a richness of invention in the variety of their forms among birds, beasts, fishes, and insects, fitted for flying, or walking, or creeping, or clinging, or mining, or swimming, covered with feathers, or wool, or hair, or shells, or scales, armed with horns, or tusks, or claws, or stings: some living in communities sociable as man, others working with a sagacity unknown to him, others again without either strength, or cunning, subsisting merely by their multitudes.

Nor can we help remarking those surprising instincts that severally guide them to their harbours, their foods, their ways of breeding and preservation, instruct them to build their nests, to make their combs, to spin their webs, and provide for the future, without knowledge of their wants. And when we reflect that many animals can find their commodious habitation only in one particular kind of plant, which they do not fail to find ready for them at their proper season, as if the vegetable kingdom were in league to support the animal, we shall be persuaded that both

were

were comprehended within the same design, suiting the qualities of the one to the occasions of the other.

6. Thus far we have considered things in separate lights, as useful to human life, or as artificial in their production or structure: if we proceed to contemplate such as may stand in both lights, wherein the use and the contrivance are equally obvious, we shall still find an ample field to range in. For we may observe by what an admirable train of preparations the vegetable kind perfects plenty of materials for our occasions: corn and pulse and fruits for our sustenance, flax and cotton for our cloathing, roots, and leaves, and woods, for our manufactures and entertainment, oils, liquors, gums, and drugs for our uses and amusements, even reeds and rushes for some little purposes we can turn them to.

How many animals are wonderfully formed and furnished in various ways, for supplying our wants and gratifying our desires! Cattle, fowl, and fish for our nourishment, the viper, the snail, the cantharides for our health, the horse and the ox endued with strength and docility for our services: their parts and even excrescences adapted to our uses, as well as those of the creatures that bore them; oil, tallow, glue, cochineal, ivory, horn, hair, wool, the nice texture of quills and feathers, the

the curious net-work of hides, capable of being rendered durable to preserve our records against the injuries of time, or softened into a covering for our tender flesh, or worked almost as close and compact as wood: their instincts severally disposing them to contribute towards our benefit and pleasure. The fearless matiff guards our houses; the faithful sheep-dog assists in tending our flocks; the sagacious hound and busy spaniel supply what we want by the dulness of our senses; the watchful cat, the digging rook, and the insidious spider, help to clear us from vermin; the solitary silk-worm imprisons herself in her cell to lay the ground-work of our manufactures; the little fly sits boring the oak-leaf to brew ink for our correspondence; the indefatigable bee labours with inimitable art to furnish wax and honey for our entertainment; the winged choiristers gladden our hearts with their music, delight our eyes with their variegated plumage, please our curiosity with the nice architecture of their nests, and skilful vigilance in tending their young, and multiply the joys of spring.

Then what a world of wonders necessary for our uses does this microcosm, the human body, contain! what multitude of vessels, glands, and ducts, to concoct and distribute our aliment! what artificial structure and excellent

excellent disposition of muscles and joints to serve for instruments of action! what amazing nicety in the organs of sense! the eye with her humours and tunicles mathematically placed and proportioned among one another; the ear in winding mazes modulating the vibrations of air into sounds; the nerves in imperceptible threads running everywhere through the fleshy parts, yet returning their notices without impediment from the furthest extremities of our limbs. And all this complicated machinery containing an infinitude of multiform works, bound up in one little compass, yet with such stupendous skill as that they do not interfere with one another's operations, nor fall into disorder upon our motions.

I do not know whether I may go on to instance in that part of our constitution enabling us to make improvement in knowledge, acquisitions of habit, dexterity, and accomplishment; because these are currently supposed to reside in the mind itself, distinguished from every thing material. If any man can satisfy himself that a perceptive Being may contain knowledge it does not perceive, as we certainly do not, and cannot with all our industry, call to mind the thousandth part of all the knowledge we possess; or have habitual sentiments wherewith it is not continually affected,

affected, I shall not argue the point with him. For my part I cannot conceive, how an improvement of knowledge or alteration of character can be effected without a change of modification, or new arrangement of parts, which cannot take place in a simple spirit uncompounded of parts: therefore I must attribute them to a mental organization, composed of fine material substance, striking perceptions momentarily upon the mind, in the manner of external objects.

And how exquisitely must this composition be framed to give us that infinite and yet regular variety of play we experience! Let any man take an English dictionary, and reflect that he knows the meaning of almost every word in that thick volume, that they present him with new ideas according as they are compounded in different styles, solemn, familiar, logical, rhetorical, poetical, and humorous: let him consider how many transactions, faces, and places he can remember, how many affections and sentiments he possesses, how many points of common knowledge he is expert in, how many ways of acting he has experience of, each whereof rise readily to his view as the occasion happens to introduce them, or as he pleases to call them up for his use or amusement, following the regular trains without confusion, or interfering with one

one another: let him consider what a multitude of works must be requisite for these purposes, and what consummate skill to range them all in proper order, within a place smaller perhaps than can be imagined, and he will be ready to acknowledge that our mental organization is still more admirable than the system of our grosser machinery.

7. Between the provinces of nature and chance, there lies a tract claimed by both, or shared in common between them: I mean the proportions and situations of bodies with respect to one another, and the motions among them usually called the order of nature; which she preserves by her necessary agency, but was first put into it by causes unknown, and accidental to us. For though the Moon be holden in her course by the two known laws of perseverance in a rectilinear motion, and external attraction, yet we know no laws of nature that should place her precisely in the orbit where she rolls, nor give her just the tangential impulse, requisite to retain her in it.

Within this intercommoned tract we may reckon the distances of the planets primary and secondary, from their respective centres, their solidities, magnitudes, and phases, their centripetal and centrifugal forces, so nearly balancing as to keep them in almost circular paths:

paths: the excentric orbits of comets, whose planes cross those of the others at very large angles, so as never to disturb their regularity by a too near attraction. The diurnal rotation of our globe giving us the vicissitudes of night and day; the oblique position of its axis ever parallel to itself, that winter and summer, seed-time and harvest, may never fail: the disposition of its surface into mountains, plains, and valleys, islands, seas, bays, and harbours: the distribution of rivers, the diversity of soils for the accommodation of human life, the burning sands, the frozen zones, the subterraneous exhalations whereon depend the variations of wind and weather, many times so necessary to be attended to, yet proceeding upon rules which no human ingenuity can reduce into a science. The just admeasurement of the elements, that water may not abound to overwhelm us, nor air fall deficient, nor earth swell to a greater mass than could be duly moistened, nor fire pass its proper boundaries: that universal element which carries on an intercourse between all parts of the world, beaming in kindly warmth from the distant Sun, and travelling immeasurable journeys from the remotest constellations. The generation of metals in such suitable quantities as that gold and silver are not too plentiful to serve us for

money,

money, nor iron and copper too scarce to furnish the artificer with instruments and the housekeeper with utensils. The appropriation of plants, and fruits, and animals, and other commodities to particular countries; whereby commerce is rendered necessary, and an acquaintance introduced among the several nations upon earth.

Nor must we omit the uses and qualities assigned to animals, wherein we can turn them most commodiously to our advantage: we have not our wool to seek from the dangerous lion, nor want the untameable tyger to plough our grounds; but the ox, the horse, and the sheep, have docility and manageableness given them for their characteristic. Creatures saleable in the fair or market are made much more prolific than those of the savage kind. Poultry and rabbits keep within their accustomed purlieus; but nobody knows where to find the coarse grained heron, or the worthless cuckoo. The family of bees abide patiently in the habitation we please to assign them, but the libertine ant will choose her own settlement from which she is hardly to be expelled; obsequiousness and different kinds of sagacity are joined in the several tribes of dogs: credulity brings the wild duck into our decoys, and the greediness of swine makes the very offal of our houses valuable.

If

If we consider lastly the reigning animal Man, who subsists by society, and receives his protection, his necessaries and accommodations, from the united labours of many persons diversly qualified, we shall see how their constitutions and talents are prudently distributed among them: so that hands are not wanted for every office of life, whether active or sedentary, venturesome or cautious, robust or delicate; how the sexes are equally proportioned, how the natural temper of some persons sets examples of virtue to others, and even their vices are so counterpoized as to check and correct one another.

8. Having traversed the confines lying under an intermingled jurisdiction, we may enter the province peculiar to chance or fortune, containing the multitude of events extraordinary, unaccountable, or produced by the concurrence of undiscoverable causes: which we may distribute into three classes, as they affect the human race, or particular kingdoms, or single persons. Under the first we may rank those lucky hits which have given rise to arts, manufactures, and sciences: printing and gunpowder were effects of mere curiosity, and accident: the Pergamenians were put upon making parchment by being denied the importation of paper from Egypt: Pythagoras is recorded to have learned the

rudiments

rudiments of music from a smith's anvil: and it is said the first sugar-baker was a pigeon, who, flying from a house-top with some dust of the mortar sticking to his feet perched upon melted molasses, the heat drove him off again in an instant, but the liquor in that part where he had lit, was found clarified just in the shape of his claw. But without building upon legendary tales, a little observation may shew us how a particular turn of genius and situation in life leads men into useful inventions, and favourable circumstances concur to give them encouragement.

How many profitable discoveries in chymistry have taken birth from that whimsical notion of finding the philosopher's stone? For how many ages did men know the magnetic virtues of the loadstone, without observing it gave a polarity to the needle? With what obstinacy did Columbus pursue a project appearing chimerical, till he opened a passage to the new world? from what small beginnings have religions, and sects in philosophy been spread wide by persons, of singular characters appearing in critical seasons? What a series of uncommon circumstances, both with respect of internal polity, and the condition of foreign nations, contributed to lay the foundation of the Macedonian and Roman greatness, and extend it

over half the globe? And in remote consequence of these inventions and incidents, mankind is become better cemented and civilized; though the earth be fuller peopled, the nations of it are fewer, every country has some intercourse with others, and the more barbarous gradually take a tincture from the more humane: so that the Turks can now depose without murdering, and discharge their ministers by other methods than the bow-string; the wild Tartars are brought into some degree of subjection, and the roving Arabs kept a little in subordination under their better policied neighbours.

9. To the second class we may refer the springs working in the rise, the growth, or the decay of kingdoms. Imbecillity of counsels, corruption of manners, or jealousies among the great, have broken empires to pieces; and extraordinary persons or remarkable incidents have generated new monarchies, or commonwealths out of their ruins. Intrepidity, policy, wisdom, and sometimes enthusiasm, popularity, or desperation of one man, has laid the foundation of a state, or caused a total revolution, enslaved or restored it to liberty, advanced it to riches and strength, or thrown all things into confusion; nor are precedents wanting of this confusion instructing those who suffer by it,

how to settle things again upon a more solid establishment.

Little colonies from Egypt and Asia have grown into the flourishing republics of Greece: the overflowings of northern adventurers erected and cantoned their military governments, which by various successes and changes of constitution have been modeled into their present form. Commerce has migrated from the Phenicians to the Venetians, from them to the Dutch, and now extends its influence over all the people of Europe, but shedding the largest portion upon our own country. Learning and accomplishment have had their vicissitudes of darkness and splendor, reason and superstition have pursued each other over most quarters of the globe. Wealth, strength, and prosperity have travelled three successive ages through Spain, France and Britain, making the two former in their turns, the terror, and the last the protection of their weaker neighbours, with the better prospect of continuing so, by how much the balance of power and preservation of liberty are a more durable basis of greatness, than pursuit of universal monarchy.

Nor do we want striking objects of reflection in the annals of our own history; where we may see how the crown, the church, and the

the barons struggling which should have the tyrannizing over the people, frustrated each other's aims: until one king by a stretch of law broke the nobles' power, and another by over-awing the legislature compelled them to disarm the hierarchy. How opportunely the shortness of Mary's, and length of Elizabeth's reign, delivered us from the greatest domestic and foreign dangers. How the total neglect of true policy, the wrong-grounded piety and obstinacy, the selfishness and greedy extravagance, the furious bigotry of succeeding counsels, opened the way to our present happy situation by the most unpromising paths.

But upon this article we must repeat what has been noted before, that the same events are providential, or not, to different persons, according to the opinion they entertain of their being desirable or mischievous: for what does not appear conducing to some end, apprehended good, will not easily be admitted as evidence of a superintending care. Therefore the Papist sees nothing further than chance in the many circumstances concurring to the reformation, nor the believer in divine hereditary right, in all that contributed to turn aside the linear succession; or at most they refer these things to the secret counsels of Heaven, which must ever remain

unfathomable by human understanding. But there is no occasion to urge exceptionable evidences, since there is such plenty, that every man may find enough in incidents that have brought on an issue he will acknowledge fortunate and profitable.

10. We proceed lastly to the third class of events, those affecting single persons. And as the dispensations of fortune are more commonly taken for providential, than the establishments of nature, because more remarkable, extraordinary, and less involving us in a long chain of prior causes: so whatever affects a man's private interests, touches him stronger than those of the community, or mankind in general. For we are all of the utmost importance to ourselves, and think every thing conducing to our benefit well worthy regard; concerning ourselves little with other things, any further than as we expect to be sharers in their consequences. Therefore let every man bestow a little pains in reflecting on the circumstances of his own situation, and the various accidents that placed him in it.

If he does not know what brought his parents together, or their parents and ancestors or fixed them in one particular quarter, or profession, or course of life: yet he may be assured all these things depended upon a thousand

thousand chances, each of which happening otherwise he would not have been what he is at present, but might have been born at another time, in another country, or of another family, or wanted those conveniencies and advantages of life he now possesses. If he cannot tell what causes operate in forming and fashioning the child before birth, yet there must have been a particular disposition of them to determine his constitution, his talents, and his natural temperament, in the manner he finds them: for he may have learned that half the children die before seven years old; that many come into the world maimed, weakly, and unhealthful, and I suppose will allow readily enough, there are multitudes whose mental endowments fall short of his own. Let him then contemplate the hazards of infancy he has run through, the advantages of converse and experience afforded, and favourable occurrences befalling him in life: how many dangers he has escaped, how many disappointments he has avoided, and how many follies he has committed without drawing on the consequences naturally expectant upon them.

These considerations would be more frequently attended to and have greater efficacy upon the minds of men, if it were not for the common humour of picking out cross accidents

accidents to ruminate upon: though a hundred things happen right, yet one that falls out amiss shall dwell upon their thoughts to the utter obliteration of all the rest, which makes them discontented and murmuring. Whereas if they would proceed impartially, and collect all that has befallen in their favour, and the circumstances surrounding them which it would hurt them to be deprived of, they would find them infinitely outnumbering their contraries. What though the season be gloomy, we have seen many fair seasons before, and there are hopes of the like returning again; nor are we destitute of alleviations towards supporting us under the present. In short, no man's condition is so miserable, but he owes something to fortune, for supplying comforts to mitigate, or helps to prevent it from growing worse. What though we see things fall out better with other people, shall we be so unreasonable as so turn their successes into our wants, and not rather keep our eye upon that variety of chances that have contributed something to our benefit,

Would men but use themselves for a while to consider from what concurrence of causes they derive their health, their strength, their abilities of body and mind, their conveniencies, and enjoyments of life, and observe fairly

fairly and carefully the course of events, so far as affecting themselves; they would find so many remarkable things among them, and discern such marks of disposition and design in the ordering of them, as to be persuaded, there is a care had of their own interests, to rejoice in the discovery, and contentedly place their dependance upon that, for their future provision.

But there are two cautions necessary to be taken by such as let their thoughts run frequently in this train. One that they do not fancy themselves the peculiar objects of attention, engrossing it all in preference to the common herd: which would engender spiritual pride, and the most pernicious kind of self-conceit because hardest to be cured. For there is no man but might experience the like particular care, if he would make the like reflection: and if he sees it plainer in his own case than in his neighbour's, it is not because there is more bestowed upon him, but because he is better acquainted with his own history, and all the turns and incidents belonging to it, the effects whereof he feels upon himself, but only sees in the gross, and at a distance, upon others. Nor is it owing to his own greater importance, that a constant attention is paid to his interests, but to that fulness of power and rich-

ness of design, which could adjust the concerns of all creatures, so that each should receive the entire share of good fortune intended him, without prejudice of the rest.

The other caution we recommend is, to be very backward in ascribing extraordinary events to an immediate operation of the agent producing them: for this would lead in the high road to superstition and enthusiasm, which by an injudicious zeal to magnify his power, do an injury to his wisdom, and destroy the very essence of Providence; which consists not in doing things by dint of force and authority, but by so contriving the order of second causes, as that they shall bring forth the projected purposes of themselves, and the longer or more complicated length they run, so much the more admirable is the disposition.

Thus I have attempted to point out the topics, from whence any one may draw evidences of a superintending providence throughout the regions of nature, or mazes of fortune: had I been able to have displayed the whole scene at large in all its colours, it might not have produced a better effect; for what a man gathers for himself, is worth a million suggested by another: they may perhaps make him put on a solemn countenance, or vent a momentary ejaculation, but

will

will hardly sink deep into his mind and memory. Therefore let each man select such of the before-mentioned heads for his contemplation, as he finds he can expatiate upon most readily, for they will strike the strongest impression. By competent practice in this method he will become gradually more expert in pursuing it, extend his observation to new spots in the prospect, and daily discover fresh lights in objects that had afforded him none before: until he attain a full conviction and intimate persuasion of a providence, as well particular, as general, by a kind of sensible evidence needing no long argumentation, nor curious disquisition to enforce or explain it.

11. But lest the rovings of his own imagination or sophisms of others should interrupt his progress, I shall endeavour to prepare for removing such obstacles as they may possibly throw in his way. It may be said, we see the courses both of nature and fortune, so far as the sagacity of man can investigate them, proceed from adequate causes, whence we have reason to conclude that all the rest proceed from the like: that in all the discoveries of causes we are able to make, many whereof run in a chain to very great lengths, we never find any thing of intelligence or design among them, but they

they always act necessarily, according to their qualities and the concurrence of them, without choice, or purpose of what they tend to compleat. Why this we very readily allow, but this heightens our idea of the contrivance that could adapt causes acting blindly in a long series of operations, so as to bring things into the same admirable order, as if they had been placed by an intelligent hand.

Who does not see there is a great deal of art and contrivance in a common watch? not that he thinks of any skill or understanding in the works themselves, combining to point out the hour and the minute, as well knowing that all their movements follow necessarily upon their shapes, and their contexture among one another: but he believes they must have been so formed and put together by some skilful artist. Well, but suppose him carried down into a mine, where he finds an engine that collects the metallic particles from their ores, works them up into springs and wheels, and dial plates, and hands, and disposes them artfully together, so as to form a perfect watch, all by mechanical operation: he would now alter his opinion and stand convinced that watches might be made without hands, by a blind mechanism proceeding without thought, or contrivance of the works it performed. Yet though he lost his idea of

ingenuity

ingenuity being requisite for making watches, upon seeing them generated by mechanical causes, and motions concurring to produce them: he would be satisfied a much greater must have been employed in constructing the engine, than he had judged needful while he believed them worked by hand, with hammers, files, pincers, and other instruments of the trade.

No doubt it will be objected here that this is a romantic supposition, for nobody ever saw an engine that will make watches: when we do, it will be time enough to seek for the artist capable of contriving so wonderful a machine. It is true, nobody ever yet saw such an engine, nor I believe ever will; for it would require much greater skill to contrive, than the sons of men are masters of: nevertheless, we have all seen engines that have brought works to perfection more curious and admirable. Examine a fruit or a seed, and you will find it nicely wrapped up in several integuments, furnished with fibres and juices ranged in their exact order, provided with springs capable of expanding into stem branches and leaves, of one particular form and contexture. The plant that bears it may be considered as an engine, fitted with roots to gather nutritious particles from the earth, sap-vessels to concoct and circulate the juices,

twigs

twigs that work them first into a bud, then a flower, then a knot for perfecting this surprising machine.

Consider the body of a fowl, what an abundance of works it contains, adapted for carrying on the business of digestion, circulation, sensation, and animal motion, in greater art and variety than any clock-work that ever yet was made by human contrivance. What then is an egg, but an engine constructed to fashion all these complicated works, and marshal them in their proper order? or what else is the matrix of the parent bird, besides another engine contrived for making eggs?

Then if we reflect that neither plant nor animal can subsist or grow without nourishment, moisture, air, and warmth, adapted variously both in quality and degree to the particular uses of the several species; that all matter being homogeneous, the qualities of bodies, small as well as great, must depend upon the structure and arrangement of their constituent parts: we must acknowledge that the elements, together with whatever nutritive or useful arises in endless variety from their commixtures, are so many little machines curiously contrived to perform their respective offices. So that the whole system of nature within these sublunary regions, commonly

monly called the world, will appear as one stupendous engine, containing, besides the works appropriated to the generation of organized compositions, an infinite multitude of others, properly fitted, and dispersed in convenient places, where they lie ready to assist in carrying on the play of vegetative, and vital clock-works.

12. Now to change the scene from mechanical to moral agents; whoever can contrive salutary rules for the good government of a community and encouragement of arts, sciences, and manufactures, is justly esteemed an excellent politician, nor could he do it without an uncommon compass of knowledge and depth of penetration. But to distribute talents, abilities, and characters, among an unsociable and savage multitude, in such manner as shall lead them gradually to strike out order and agreement, commerce and science, for themselves, requires a greater skill than human sagacity can arrive at.

If it be said, the steps a people take in growing civilized, are determined by their bodily temperament, their diet, their ways of living, the form and produce of their country, the conduct of their neighbours, and occurrences befaling among themselves, occasioned by natural causes; and thus the courses of the moral world follow those of the

the natural: this will bring us back to our great engine again, which we find so wonderfully constructed as not only to produce powers of action, but to determine the harmony of their operations; not only to form the pipes to their perfect tone, but as I may say, to ascertain the particular tunes and concerts and variations that shall be played among them. And this immense machine, stored with such an inconceivable multiplicity of complicated works, must appear to every unprejudiced eye to have been the performance of some wise and excellent artist: for we have shewn in a former place that it had a beginning, as bearing evident marks that it could not have stood for ever in the same form and condition we see it at present.

Now if any one shall insist it arose spontaneously out of a Chaos, whose particles lay in such positions, and had such motions among them as must necessarily produce a regular world, without any intelligent hand to fashion it; I don't know how he will make out his assertion by probable, or even plausible, conjecture, to our apprehension. However, it is not worth the while to contest the point, for supposing it proved, there will need a more consummate wisdom and extensive intelligence, to give the motions and positions

positions to matter from whence so admirable a system must necessarily result, than if it had been ranged therein by an immediate operation. For every fresh discovery of natural causes only suspends our opinion of an operator for the present, or rather removes it from the effect to the cause: and the farther steps we can take in tracing them, still encrease the necessity of a discernment capable of pursuing its purposes surely, through so many successive stages, and intricate channels.

Therefore for my part, I should not care if the succession of natural causes could be proved eternal, and that as corn grows from the ground, and the grain of it passing through the bodies of animals, and the straw being trodden under foot in the farm-yard, becomes manure, which grows into fresh corn again some following year: so the worlds were generated by the action of pre-existent principles, and upon dissolution become resolved into their principles again, which would produce new worlds out of their materials in succeeding ages. For this would make the whole material universe but one still more stupendous engine, of a contrivance beyond all bounds of imagination, constructed by a power, whose existence and wisdom had no beginning, and therefore might

might well have operated from everlasting; nor can a time be limited when it must have first begun to work.

But this is a length of speculation I believe very rarely attempted to be run; and perhaps were as well let alone, having no solid ground to run upon. The more judicious will be contented to find a stop in their investigations, nor is there hurt in pursuing them, so far as they can do it with clearness upon the fund of experience and observation, and the sober reasonings to be deduced therefrom: but in so doing, as was observed before, they will find the necessity of a contriving wisdom grow upon them the further they go. Men's insight into natural causes will be different in proportion to the strength of their vision, and opportunities of discernment; but they can never find any that was not itself an effect of some prior cause, or does not carry marks of a design and contrivance, suiting it to the productions it brings forth. Therefore wherever each person's line of discovery ends, there of course he will place the disposing hand; nor need he think amiss of the length or shortness of other people's lines, since they all terminate upon the same object: only the vulgar thinks it standing nearer to him than it really does, whereas the more penetrating, who plainly discerns it is not

not there, does but remove it a few paces further; for to this original, sooner or later, they both must have recourse.

13. It may be alleged in the second place, that the case is different between the works of nature and art; we know the latter must have been conducted with design and contrivance, because we have seen them frequently completed by men, who, we know, could not proceed without, and the experience of what has been done within our knowledge, teaches us to discern the marks of art, as we know the faces of our acquaintance by having been familiar among them. For a savage, who had no artificers of any kind in his country, might perhaps be persuaded that watches grew from trees, as well as oranges and cocoa-nuts. Thus we get our idea of art from our experience of the performances we have seen achieved by it. But we have not the like experience in the productions of nature, for we never saw an operator at work upon them, in whom we might perceive whether he proceeded with thought, and judgment, in the methods taken for bringing them forth.

Why then should we presume contrivance necessary, without warrant from experience of any thing similar produced the like way? especially since we infer that industry has been

employed, only upon finding things out of their natural order. When we see trees grow in equidistant spots and rows, or water run along in trenches through higher grounds, we conclude it must have been the work of men; because the trees could not have sprouted up, nor the water worn a channel for itself, in that manner. Therefore art being constantly distinguished by the alteration made in works of natural causes, should seem an evidence that there is none of it in them: because we could not discover what is artificial, so readily as we do upon inspection, if it had not a peculiar characteristic wanting in every thing natural.

To this I shall reply, that there are different arts proceeding severally upon principles and rules of their own, and therefore have a sufficient characteristic to distinguish them from others. When we find seams in a cloth, we know there has been art used upon it after it came from the loom, which does not prove there was none employed in the weaving, but only that the arts of the sempstress and the tailor were different from that of the weaver: for there would be more skill requisite to make a shirt, or a coat in one piece, so as exactly to fit the wearer, than to make the cloth first, and work it up to his measure afterwards. Our manufactures for the most part

part pass through many hands, each artist preparing materials for the next to exercise his industry upon: but the marks of art appearing in the performances of the latter, derogate nothing from the skill exhibited in those of the former; so neither does the contrivance distinguishable in them all, destroy the evidence of it in those original materials the first operator fetches directly from the shop of nature; which contain a greater variety of parts, a nicer structure and accuracy of disposition, than any composition that can afterwards be framed out of them.

Nor do there want characteristics sufficient to distinguish the works of human industry from the productions of nature, without supposing the marks of contrivance appropriated to one of them alone: for the former are more clumsily put together, composed of grosser materials, with aukward joinings by seams, tenons, nails, and glues, betraying the imperfections of their workman to the eye; and not like the latter interwoven with fine threads running imperceptibly among the parts, so that you cannot see what holds them together, nor where one begins, and another ends. If we admire the contrivances of art, it is either comparatively with the ordinary performances of art, which afford us the pleasure of novelty; or because they add

some improvement to what has been done by nature, though the additions be not worked with so masterly a hand as the foundation they advanced upon.

A tree so well imitated in wax work, with branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruit, as that the beholder shall be ready to take it for a rsal one, strikes the eye with admiration, because surpassing whatever we have seen before of the kind, and bespeaks a nicety and dexterity of execution in the maker: but examine the parts and internal structure, and you will find it nothing comparable to the original, which yet we take little notice of, because it is so common, growing out of the ground without any trouble of ours to form it. We think the elegancies of a garden far beyond the rude confusion of a wilderness, overrun with briars and weeds: but the gardener, were he capable of making the trees, the flowers, and the turf he employs, would find much more thought and contrivance requisite for the task, than he did in the proper disposition of them among his walks and plantations. Thus in the finest performances of human industry, man only gives the finishing stroke, contributing little from his own fund to the exquisiteness of the work, in comparison of what he draws from elsewhere.

Another difference between the two kinds of

of productions is this, that man performs his works by an immediate operation, and though he may run some of them considerable lengths, yet he must use his vigilance and set to his helping hand from time to time, in the several steps of their progress. After he has picked the flax, he must take further pains to spin the thread, to weave the cloth, to cut out, and make up the garment, and lastly to apply it to his uses, he may indeed contrive machines that shall go a little way in performing his works, for he can make corn mills and throwing mills, that grind the corn he must else have pounded in a mortar, or throw the silk he used to wind off with his fingers: but then they require correcting, repairing, and continual tendency, to set, to supply them, to take away what is finished, and to assist them in those parts of the work they are not capable of performing alone. Nor can he, like nature, construct engines that shall construct one another in numberless successions, each compleating its task without manual operation to assist it: nor form such tools as the elements, that shall work spontaneously without a hand to employ them.

14. We commonly distinguish the works of human production from those of nature, as we do the hand-writing of one person from another's,

another's, not by the neatness but peculiar turn of the strokes: for though the writing be fine, it is rather from the cut, than barely the elegance of the letter, that we know from whose pen it came. By long and daily acquaintance among natural causes, we learn the manner in which they act, and upon seeing things formed after a different manner, we conclude the hand of man must have interfered. If we employ the terms artificial and designed, in contradistinction to natural and mechanical, it is because custom has appropriated them to the performances of man, who we know by experience cannot act without some purpose and understanding, therefore they mean no more than something done by his skill or labour: yet this does not hinder but there may be design and contrivance in other productions, nor is it any better than a negative proof, that is, none at all, that we have no experience of an operator ever seen working upon them.

Though experience be the ground-work of our knowledge, it bears an inconsiderable proportion to the building erected thereupon: as a foundation makes but a small part of the house, and indeed is of none other use to the family than for supporting the offices and chambers above. Had we no further supplies beyond what were received directly from experience,

perience, he that had the best memory would be the cleverest and most accomplished man, because he could retain more than another that had a worse: but every body knows, that judgement and understanding are different qualities from memory, though they can make no progress without it. We see things continually change their forms, new productions appearing, and old ones falling to decay, and we know those fluctuations must be made by certain powers, or causes, operating them: and these causes, however numerous, we commonly range for convenience sake, under three classes, nature, chance, and voluntary operation, each having its peculiar characteristic distinguishing it from the others.

Nature proceeds by necessity in a constant and steady regularity: volition with apprehension and design of some purpose to be compleated: but the very essence of chance consists in undesignedness, and deviation from rule. As for the natural properties of bodies, they depend upon their structure, invisible organizations, or upon the modifications of their imperceptible particles: nor will these alone suffice to give them their activity, but serve only to turn or disperse the force of some other spring upon the subjects they affect. For nothing is more unanimously agreed among those who have looked most narrowly

narrowly into the nature of bodies, than that they do not act originally from themselves, but only transmit an action received by impulse from one another. So that plants vegetate, animal circulations go on, lead presses downwards, steel recoils, fire dissipates, lightning rends, salts, acids, drugs, menstruums exert their vigour, by virtue of a force thrown into them from elsewhere. Nobody can tell from what channel to derive this mighty force: one may conjecture an ether repelling, or innumerable streams of still more subtil matter continually pervading them; and rushing with violence in all directions, but whether we can find it or no, there must be an inexhaustible fund of activity somewhere, to work all those surprizing effects we see produced around us. And if we could clearly discover the ether, or the rushing torrent, still we should want another source to supply them with the force we know is not their own, since they are but fluid bodies, conveying an impulse first imparted to them, and having none other motions than those they had taken from something else before.

If we turn our thoughts next to voluntary agency, we shall find it by examples of what we do ourselves, proceeding in another manner; not with a force transmitted from any thing

thing external, but exerted originally by a power of our own: motives may recommend, but the action begins in the agent himself. For if you request a friend to do something, how much soever you may be esteemed the cause of what is done, you convey no efficacy to him for the doing it: for he could have done it without your asking, but bodies could not perform their offices without the secret springs that set them at work.

Let us now consider the third class of causes, those ascribed to chance, and we shall find they can have had no beginning in themselves, but follow upon the operation of the other two: for either natural or voluntary causes must be at work, before there can be any chance what event they shall produce. Though we act always with apprehension of some purpose to be attained, yet other consequences oftentimes ensue than those we apprehended, and this opens the door to chance. A man shoots at a rat in his yard, and kills a chicken which he did not intend, therefore we call this accidental: but he must have shot, or no accident at all could have ensued. Or he throws with a pair of dice, and we say it is chance what cast will come up: perhaps that comes up he wishes, but he cannot be said to have designed it, for design implies a knowledge, real or imaginary, of the measures

sures proper to compass it, which he has not: yet he must throw, or there can be no cast at all, for chance has no power to do any thing without him.

But chance takes place likewise in events wherewith human agency has nothing to do: yet there must be natural causes in motion, before any thing can fall out accidentally among them; it is only our uncertainty of their concurrence and powers, that gives chance a title to the production. When a man plants a hazel he does not think it accidental that he should gather nuts therefrom, and not strawberries; but if he receives a foreign plant he has never seen before, nor had any account of, he may reckon it a chance whether it shall bear nuts, or pulpy fruit, whether white, or red, or yellow blossoms. We do not apprehended it in the power of chance to make the sun shine at midnight, because the times of his rising depend upon the known courses of nature: but nothing is esteemed more casual than the weather, yet rain, and storms, and thunders, and serene airs proceed from natural causes, which must have their certain effect according to their respective qualities and proportions, and if we knew them exactly, we might calculate the variations of weather, as well as changes of the moon.

15. Thus

15. Thus among all the operations falling under our notice, there is but one source we know of, from whence they could originally derive: volition being the only power capable of beginning action or giving an impulse it did not first receive. For nature is nothing more than a conveyance, whose channels in some measure we can trace, conducting activity from one substance to another: and chance grows like an excrescence from the situation, the circumstances attending, or mutual concurrence of other causes. Therefore when we ascribe the beginning of action to a voluntary agent, we are so far from contradicting or departing from experience, that we build entirely upon that bottom, because we have no experience of any thing besides, that can act otherwise than by transmitting an operation already begun. And whoever supposes a substance involuntarily self-moving, or causing a new impulse not in being before, builds upon mere hypothesis, without any fact within the compass of his observation to support it. Whereas he that holds the contrary, does it because experience of his own actions teaches him that he begins them himself, but that every thing acting involuntarily proceeds in another manner, only carrying on an operation begun by some other agent.

But

But of the works we effect ourselves, some are intentional, others undesigned; among those we produce with design, some are done easily and carelessly, others with art, contrivance, labour, and study, in different degrees of greater or less: and we judge of those degrees upon examination of the performance, where the hand is unknown, by the fineness of the parts, manner of the disposition, stages of the operation, and length of the measures necessary to be thought on for completing it. Why then may not we apply this rule founded on experience to the productions of nature? which being found exquisite in their workmanship, admirable in their disposition, and perfected through a long series of operations preparing for one another, may warrant us to judge from these marks, how consummate and boundless must be the wisdom of their author.

Nor yet can we infer that his works must be operose, because we are conscious of our own being so, for we know by experience that in proportion to the progress a man has made in his art or science, he acquires a greater expertness, and takes in more comprehensive views at a glance, which facilitate his work, and enable him to lay his schemes the more readily. There is no labour in volition nor intelligence of objects clearly apprehended,

labour

labour and weariness reside in the limbs, or corporeal instruments we employ as well in meditation as in action, difficulty and trouble spring from the investigation of knowledge we have not, or the obstructions met with in tracing out a plan not yet lying compleat before us. But that power which was the beginning of all action, could have no acquisition of knowledge to make, because there was nothing external to furnish him with the lights; nor ever rectify his plan, because there is nothing besides his own works to suggest an amendment. Nevertheless, the consciousness of our own doing many things undesignedly and accidentally, may still leave a suspicion that chance has some share in what we see around us: but supposing this suspicion warrantable, we may know that nature was not of her production, by the regularity, and tendency to profitable purposes, apparent in it.

For chance works always at random, without rule or aim, and though she may now and then hit upon something regular or advantageous, it is very rarely, and then intermingled among a thousand wild, and fruitless vagaries. Tully tells us, a hog has been known to make a perfect letter A with his snout upon the ground, but nobody ever saw, or thought it possible to see, the whole poem

poem of Ennius scratched out in that manner: and I believe he might have added safely, that no man ever saw a single A written by a hog, without a multitude of other irregular scratches round about it. If we had left a number of letters upon a table written on bits of card, and returning after some time into the room, should find them lying upon the floor in such manner as to compose a grammatical sentence; we should certainly believe they had been placed by somebody, and not brushed off the table accidentally: what then should hinder, but that, upon finding the elements disposed into organized bodies, whether animal or vegetable, we may conclude the causes that brought them into that order were provided with intention they should produce this effect? But it is said the bits of card, however they came upon the ground, must have taken some position or other, and there was as much possibility they should take that of a sentence, as any other you can imagine: for suppose you have only four of them which you place in a line blindfold, and then find they spell the word HAND, it was but twenty-three to one against their so doing: and if they had stood in any other position, as DNHA which makes no word at all, there was the like chance of twenty-three to one against its so happening.

Therefore

Therefore we have no reason to admire any particular order we see things stands in, since at all events they must have taken some position, with respect to one another equally unlikely: for it is not the singularity of their position, which belongs alike to every one they could be cast into, but its resemblance with those positions man uses to range them in for serving his purposes, that makes us believe it his doing. For order is relative to our apprehensions; every number of things must lie in some certain situation with respect to one another, which will appear orderly to a person familiarly acquainted with it: but we term that order, which corresponds with those manners of arrangement it suits our convenience most frequently to observe.

Very well; admit all this to be as alleged: nevertheless that resemblance of the letters with the manner in which man ordinarily places them for his purposes, will be thought an invincible presumption by every one, of their being so placed by design: therefore why should not the same resemblance with the works of design, which we behold in the productions of nature be deemed as invincible a presumption of their being formed with intention of their yielding those benefits received from them by mankind, or answering those ends we see them attain? And even supposing,

supposing, what cannot easily be supposed, that the component parts of them might have fallen into that order by chance, yet considering by what a long series of operations, and through how many complicated channels they were brought thither, it was millions of millions to one they had not: so that in every case the believer has all this advantage over the infidel, there being these immense odds, that he is in the right rather than the other.

Which odds, were there nothing surer to go upon, might satisfy any reasonable person; especially when he reflects, that we have not absolute certainty for our ground of proceeding in the common transactions of life. For how know we the properties of bodies unless by constant experience of their effects? we cannot penetrate into the imperceptible causes whereon they depend: but if these causes were brought together by chance, there is a possibility that the same chance may suddenly remove them, and substitute others of a contrary effect: so that in ascribing the order of nature to design, if we have not mathematical demonstration, we have at least as good assurance that the house will not fall upon our heads, that the wood we throw upon the fire will not burst like gunpowder, that the victuals we eat will not poison us: for we cannot mathematically demonstrate

demonstrate these things, yet are none of us uneasy, or disturbed at the want of it, but rest contented upon the basis of experience, and such knowledge of the powers and qualities of bodies, as we can gather therefrom.

16. But the third and most plausible objection against the wisdom of nature is drawn from the faults, imperfections, and trifling productions, alleged to be found abounding therein. How many diseases and mishapen forms do we see among plants and animals? how often does nature fail in midway, beginning but not perfecting her seeds, and embryos? how many unavailing meteors, tossings of sand upon the shore and dust about in the air, that serve to no purpose? how many blights and damps scorching heats and corrosive airs, waste and wear away her works? how many accidents happen to man, brought on by a concurrence of uncommon causes, but attended with no consequences either good, or bad? and how many others tending to his disappointment, trouble, and damage?

All these may seem not barely a negative evidence carrying no marks of design, but a positive, shewing there was none in their production: for it may be urged that if the apparent tendency of measures to an end be the proof upon which we judge of there

being an intelligence employed in contriving them, those which are wholly nugatory, tending to no end at all, or which frustrate the purposes pursued by other measures already taken, cannot have been conducted with design, as bearing an opposite character. When nature forms her plants in curious organizations proper for yielding their encrease, we think ourselves assured, the end pursued thereby must be to produce seeds and fruits, either for propagating their species, or serving the uses of man: but when blights, or chills, or other causes render this purpose abortive, it will be said these cannot have proceeded from the same hand, or at least must have been accidental, unthought of, and extraneous to the plan. For it is inconsistent to imagine the same design can contain a long train of measures for perfecting a work, and others at the same time for defeating it.

But to make this objection valid, we must have another support to under-prop it, to wit, that we know precisely the whole of the design, or at least that it must be similar to those of our own framing; which is a foundation we do not care to trust to in judging of one anothers performances: for we are very frequently convinced a thing was done with design, where we cannot possibly guess what the design should be, nor find it answering

any

any end that we should endeavour to compass ourselves. Nor is it a proof that measures have been taken in vain, because they fail of compleating the purpose we expected to have seen answered by them unless we know all their tendencies, and can be well assured, there was none other end whereto they were necessarily conducive so far as they have gone. Surely it is too hasty a judgment to pronounce all imperfect formations, and all interruptions or irregularities in the works of nature useless, when we many times find our own uses in them.

Our asparagus, our cauliflowers, and our garden stuff, are but half-formed productions, which when come to their natural perfection, are no longer fit for our tables: we find a place there for green gooseberries, and half-grown apricots, and do not relish our peas and beans when ripened to their full maturity. Bezoar, civet, and castor, are the diseases of animals: gums, oak-galls, and variegated leaves, the distempers of plants. Knee-timber, the distortion of nature, is more valuable than the straight: and double blossoms, which seem her errors as seldom yielding seed, are coveted by us in contempt of the single. We prune, and poll, and cut our trees into unnatural shapes: and make capons, wethers, and oxen by mutilation. As much as

we despise the vile tribes of insects, there are some of them of consequence enough to claim our regard, as the cochineal, the bee, and the silkworm. The most trifling objects sometimes deserve our attention, or assist us in the discoveries of science: little accidents have an influence upon our affairs: even disappointments and troubles furnish a great part of our employment, and bear no inconsiderable share in forming the tempers, the virtues, and the characters.

Some commodities of natural growth, and many of our manufactures, seem formed on purpose to be destroyed again, as coals, peat, candles, pastry, gunpowder, because their use lies solely in the consumption. Nor is it deemed an inconsistency in human understanding, to contrive engines for breaking to pieces the corn it has been industrious to cultivate, or to render it unfit either for seed or food in making starch, pastes, or powders, or to extract a small part of its virtue, spoiling all the rest in the brewery or distillery. Why then should we arraign nature of inconsistency for making imperfect productions, or destroying those she has compleated until we know what further compositions she may, or may not form of their crudities, and what distilleries she may raise from their corruption?

But

But we very confidently decide, that every thing must be nugatory which has not a visible tendency to the services of man: as if we knew all the channels by which our uses are conveyed to us, or that what does not advance them immediately could not do it remotely. Why must we needs pronouce the earthworm an unprofitable reptile, because we cannot eat his flesh, not make gloves of his skin? perhaps he assists the ploughman to fructify the earth by turning it continually, or opens the mould among the fibrous roots of grass, where the spade could not reach without bruising them to pieces: so that we may be beholden to him in part for our daily bread, and owe him more thanks than anger for defiling the turf in our gardens. Why must it necessarily be a waste in nature that such multitudes of seeds and vegetables perish by weather or other accidents? how know we that their putrefaction is not a distillery from whence the air we breathe is supplied with that vivifying spirit whereby it sustains us? we may know by the fermentation and warmth arising from them when laid in heaps, that they contain an active spirit: and though upon holding our faces over them; we find it rather of a suffocating than enlivening quality, because taken in too great quantities, yet so we should brandy if poured down

down by pints, which nevertheless proves an excellent cordial properly administered.

The more narrowly men pry into the courses of nature, their mutual dependencies and effects upon one another, they daily discover new uses unknown or unthought of before, and that even in things vulgarly esteemed pernicious: from whence it is a reasonable presumption that there remain innumerable uses still behind, which never will and never can be discovered while we have no better faculties than those allotted us at present. But even admitting the total uselessness of some phenomena; this would not invalidate our argument with respect to those whose uses are manifest. We do not reason thus in regard to one another, if we see a man act undesignedly in some instances, we do not conclude he does so in others, where we can discern and approve his design. And it will be enough for all necessary purposes, if we satisfy ourselves there is a wisdom in the productions formed around us, though it should not extend to them all without exception. Nay, the vulgar, who seem to apprehend chance as having a joint share in the government of the world, find therein another subject for wisdom to work upon, in preventing or remedying the errors of chance, and making such ample provision

provision for those formations which are liable to accident, that there may be enough both for use and for waste: and instance whereof we have in the rain, which is raised in such quantities, as though one half be lost in the sea, the other half suffices to water the land.

But, for my part, I see no reason to determine upon the absolute uselessness of any provision: if there be some which afford room to believe they do no benefit to man, and others from whence he reaps a trifling advantage not at all proportionable to the vastness of preparation, (of which there might be instances produced,) it seems a more probable conclusion, that they were made for other Beings, and that whatever is waste to us was expedient to them. For why should we persuade ourselves the boundless universe must contain no more inhabitants than those crawling about this little globe? or what else besides vulgar prejudice, makes us think it impossible, that life, sense and activity, can subsist without such gross organizations as render us visible to one another? And as we know there are little animals which live by the destruction and putrefaction of larger bodies; so it is not improbable there may be other creatures who find their uses in the same materials that supply us with ours; but being

being of very different natures receive their benefit from different compositions and modifications of them, which are wholly useless or pernicious to animals.

17. Having gotten over these objections, we must leave it to each man to apply the remedies to such particular ones as are apt to start up occasionally from events relating to himself. But a little calm reflection may quickly satisfy him, that these temptations to murmur arise from a false idea of the design pursued by Providence, which he measures by his own selfish, narrow views. We run eagerly after pleasure, profit, or the prosecution of some present prevailing desire, and if things happen cross to our wishes, think ourselves neglected, or unfavourably dealt with; because we cannot conceive any thing contrived wisely that does not help us forward in our career. Whereas Providence constantly aims at the general good, or the whole good of particulars in preference to their temporary advantage or indulgence: we have innumerable sources of gratification afforded us, but the withholding such of them as would be attended with mischievous consequences, is no less a kindness, though we do not see it. For we take in our prospect by halves; and not unfrequently complain of those very circumstances for obstructing our

our schemes, which promote them most effectually, or furnish us with the opportunities of laying them.

How grievous does it appear to the farmer when the rains or frosts prevent his sowing, or frequent showers double his charges, his labour, his care, his attendance, in a catching harvest? I shall not urge upon him the trite fable of Jupiter letting a farm with command of the weather, and the tenant ruining himself by that very privilege; because perhaps he will not believe but he could have managed it more wisely. I shall rather suggest to him a consideration more obvious to his own discernment, which is, that if the seasons were constantly favourable, and the crops certain, the business of agriculture would be so easy that gentlemen might manage their own lands by help of a bailiff: so there would be no farm to let for him to get his living by, nor could he expect to earn any thing more than the wages of a common labourer.

And in all conditions of life, it is common for disappointment and difficulty to quicken the industry, whet the wits, and ripen the experience, by which we work out our advantages and pleasures; and for troubles passed through to give relish to subsequent enjoyments. But these good consequences will not appear at the time when we want their

comfort

comfort most, without a proper disposition of mind inclining us to expect them; which being not attainable with a wish, requires our repeated endeavours to inure ourselves to it. By contemplation of things apparently providential, and diligent observation of events that terminate better than they promised, we may gain an habitual persuasion of a wisdom and goodness employed in conducting them: which will beget a reasonable presumption of the like having been exerted where we do not see the marks of them. As practice renders the faculties more acute, we shall find our prospect gradually enlarge, discovering footsteps of Providence in places where we saw nothing but chance and trifle before: until we form something of a system, and make an imperfect acquaintance with the ways in which wisdom uses to proceed.

But there is a caution to be taken with regard to the objects whereto we direct our observation: for if we suffer our zeal to run beyond our reason, we may chance to see the hand of Providence where it is not, and while we fancy ourselves following its traces, may wander into the wilds of superstition and enthusiasm, full stocked with dreams, omens, signs, prognostics, judgments, and other delusive phantoms. If any extraordinary significations be vouchsafed at any time, they

they come unthought, and manifest themselves instantaneously, like lightning, by their own strength and brightness: therefore it is in vain to think of reducing them into a science which can be built only upon the bottom of familiar experience. But it is in nature and the ordinary courses of events, that we are to seek for such of the divine counsels as are fit for us to know; for all the motions of nature lying in the hand of God, there is no doubt of his being able to manifest to us so much as he judges proper therein: this then is the book from whence we are to draw our science, and it behoves us to study the style and method of it carefully. The consciousness of our shortsightedness may teach us to expect many things unaccountable: but whatever is so, belongs not to us to descant upon, nor can we justly take any thing for a sign or a judgment, without tracing a visible connection between causes and effects.

Nor will it suffice to consider barely the appearances of nature or train of events, without observing further what effect they have upon the moral world, and in what manner they severally contribute towards forming the tempers, the apprehensions, the desires, and sentiments, whereon our uses and enjoyments depend as much as upon things external.

external. But if what has been offered in the former parts of this work should happen to gain credit, so as to make it appear probable that this life is a preparation for the next: not only as our good or evil conduct draws on its respective reward or punishment, but as our habits of thought and action operate upon the spiritual body we carry within us, and gradually work out the powers, the talents, the genius, suited to the functions we are destined to perform hereafter: this will open a new field of observation, wherein though we cannot tell precisely what are the particular uses of every thing we see, yet we may gather from the variety of professions, conditions, and ways of life, whereinto men are cast by nature, or led by accident, that there are further uses designed beyond those we discern, and that whatever appears unaccountable in our present dispensations, has its reference to future consequences, in the regions lying out of our ken.

After competent practice in these exercises, we shall begin to look upon every thing as providential, not indeed originally so as exhibiting marks of a design, but capable of being employed in it, and deriving their evidence of being so employed from the opinion we have already established upon the foundation of other evidences. And if we

try

try to frame a theory of the particular steps whereby they promote their design, it may help to strengthen our opinion and can do no hurt, provided nothing be admitted inconsistent with the facts we experience. This idea of every thing providential, according to the strength of its impression, will infallibly beget a proportionable sense of our being continually under the care and direction of Providence, so that nothing happens to us in vain, but even trifling occurrences and sinister accidents terminate in some solid advantage, greater or less, near or remote. Nevertheless, in order to reap the full benefit of such a sense, which we shall miss of if we look for it in the wrong quarter, I must repeat what I have remarked before, that the advantage to be expected is not always the removal of our present distress, nor the procurement of any thing we have now in our desires. Yet the persuasion of distant good, to arise from what passes with us, is an alleviation of present uneasiness: or at least takes off that regret which doubles the pressure, and perhaps makes the whole weight. For it has been said of old that pain of itself is no evil, but takes its sting from reflection: trouble and reflection certainly fix their seat there. When men look upon what befals them as an injury or cruelty, then it

is they are hurt by what they feel: but if there be any pleasurable object ready whereon reflection can be turned, the evil will sit light; or at worst there will be gleams of comfort at every little interval between the attacks of pain: and we have no reason to despise the remedy that gives a partial relief, because it does not work a perfect cure.

18. But the cares of Providence, how universally soever extended, do not supersede the necessity of our own cares to avail ourselves of the opportunities put into our hands. What though the earth be stored with food of all kinds by the bounty of heaven, we must gather and prepare it for ourselves, or shall starve in the midst of plenty. What thousand curious engines be continually at work in the human body to concoct, to secrete, and distribute the juices necessary for preserving the vigour of health: yet we must assist their play by temperance, and exercise, or sometimes by medicine, or the machine will quickly run into disorder. For our powers of action, and the sense given us to direct them, being among the provisions made for our benefit, by abusing them we may easily frustrate the effects of all the rest, therefore it behoves us to apply them so as may conduce most to our happiness, the proper goal whereto we are to steer.

Now

Now there needs not much argument to persuade men they will be happy in the gratification of their desires so long as it may last with relish; nor can they fail of knowing by experience, that desire is not of so inflexible a nature but that it may be made to take a new ply, and brought to fasten upon different objects by care and industry. But Providence having the disposal of all events universally, its purposes can never be defeated: therefore so far as our desires coincide with them, they can never be crossed or disappointed: so the road to happiness is plain where we can discern what those purposes are, and surmount the difficulty of bending desire until it falls into the same line.

Our idea of Providence will lead us to conclude, it aims at the general good of the creation, or the whole good of individuals, and even their temporary accommodations and enjoyments whenever compatible with the other two: therefore this is the course it will be most expedient for us to put ourselves into Our amusements and conveniencies, and the ordinary pursuits of life, do not lead us out of our way, while we have nothing of greater moment to pursue: but these are to be regarded only as occasional employments to keep us in action, or underparts of our design to be taken up or laid aside with indifference;

difference; for our principal attention is due to securing the main chance, and making our service as extensive to our fellow-creatures as opportunity will permit.

This is properly our business and the perfection of our nature, for children are selfish and short sighted, their views confined always to their own pleasures, or wants of the present moment: but as they grow up, their prospect opens, and their sensibility spreads, they can feel a pleasure in making advances towards distant good, and find a conscious complacence in the good offices they do to others. The difference between manly and childish lies in the largeness and importance of design, with a disregard of humour, appetite, and indulgence, never suffering them to occupy our thoughts a moment longer than we judge expedient. Nor can we be said to have arrived at the perfection of manhood, until whatever appears most profitable upon the whole, becomes an object of real desire, so as to afford a present gratification in the steps taken to prosecute it: and makes us feel a sensible complacence in any dispensation of Providence we can conceive conducing to our own or the general benefit, though in the remotest futurity. These then are the points; it behoves us to labour most industriously, as being our greatest improvement, which

which, if once compleatly attained, so as that distant good could be made the subject of joy and desire equally with present, would both conduct us surest to our goal, and render our intermediate journey pleasant.

But it is not enough to take up a general resolution of pursuing always the greater good, for we do not always know in what quarter it lies, and when we clearly discern our way, cannot always bring ourselves to travel in it. For the consequences of actions often terminate so contrary to first appearance, the measures requisite for attaining an advantage are so intricate, and so many things to be taken into consideration which do not easily present themselves, that we need particular rules and maxims to supply the deficiency of our judgment, and serve us respectively for guides in each particular situation of circumstances.

Then desire, though capable of yielding to control, yet will not come and go, stop short, or change its course, upon the word of command; but requires art and management to model it into the shape we want. The necessities and occasions of life oblige us often to confine our whole attention to the present instant, and to objects lying close before us: some innocent desires must be nourished to rouze us to activity, and others

not quite so, may be usefully employed to assist in mastering the more dangerous: all this discipline we should scarce have skill or strength enough to practise, without some methods and incitements suggested to help us. Add to this, that imagination bearing a very considerable sway in our motions, it will be of the utmost consequence to have this faculty well stored with opinions, sentiments, inclinations, and habits, that it may assist readily in executing the dictates of reason, or act as her deputy in the hurry of business, or upon sudden emergencies, when there is no room for sober deliberation. These rules, and methods, and sentiments, necessary to direct the judgment, to rectify the will, and purify the imagination, make up what I conceive is properly called Religion: which is to be calculated rather for the uses of the heart than of the head, by how much of greater importance it is to practise what we know, than to encrease our knowledge.

Therefore I take Religion to be distinguished from Philosophy by having its principal residence in the imagination: not that I mean to insinuate thereby that it is a thing imaginary, or the tenets of it arbitrary; but a man may lay up in mind the discoveries of his understanding, and continue to use them, after he has utterly forgotten the foundations whereon

whereon they were grounded. So likewise the produce of sound and solid reasoning may be inculcated into another, who has not capacity to judge of them himself, and to him they will be mere persuasions of the mind; nevertheless they may prove of excellent service and necessary use for his conduct. And when we consider that these persuasions are to be calculated for general benefit, as likewise how few there are who could enter into the grounds of them, if laid open ever so carefully to their view, a man that has the good of others at heart will be content to find less of rational inference and connection, than he would desire upon his own private account. These considerations open into a new field, which we shall endeavour to examine more distinctly in the remaining part of our progress.

CHAP. VII.

RELIGION.

IF any body shall expect, from the conclusion of the last chapter and title of this, to see me enter upon forming a compleat scheme

of rules both for doctrine and practice, he must have a much higher or a meaner opinion of my understanding, than I think any man can deserve: the former, if he supposes me equal to the task; the latter, if he believes me capable of so wild an attempt without probability of success. For to perfect such a design, one had need not only to know the things above, things round about us, and understanding human nature in general, but likewise the passions, affections, apprehensions, capacities, frailties, and advantages belonging to it: together with what I may call the materia medica of morality, that is, the conceptions, persuasions, maxims, customs, institutions, employable therein, their several efficacies or tendencies, their mischievous as well as salutary qualities, and to what particular disorders or purposes of invigorating the health, they are respectively applicable.

Yet conscious as I am of insufficiency upon these points, I should neither grudge nor scruple to produce what little I could of my own framing, were such endeavours at all needful: but there is no occasion to undergo the laborious drudgery of making brick without straw, at least until we shall have tried what can be done with the materials already supplied to our hands. When we find them

fail

fail of expectation, it will be time enough to think of doing the best we can upon our own bottom: if they do not fail, they will answer our purpose more effectually than any thing we could have prepared ourselves: for were it possible to strike out a new system equally good, this might not be so advantageous as building upon an old one. Men are not easily put out of their accustomed trains of thinking, nor will be found willing to take a new road where every thing must appear strange and uncouth: and if they were, could not make so good advances as upon grounds that were familiar to them before.

For this reason, if there were no better, I am warranted in having recourse to the doctrines prevailing in these countries, borrowing from thence what I may want for my future occasions, and supporting what I take upon the foundations already laid down in the foregoing sheets. Not that I mean to call in authority to my aid, for this would be departing from my plan: my first proposal being to build entirely upon human reason, I cannot consistently therewith take any thing for authority besides nature and experience; nor did I set out in confidence of any mighty feats I should perform, but only to try for experiment's sake what might be done by my own industry. I am not conscious of having advanced

advanced any thing in contradiction of the opinions generally received as fundamental, nor yet any thing which had not its support independent on them. My not using authority ought no more to be taken as a proof of rejecting than receiving it: for it was my business to go on quietly my own way without taking side among contending parties; desirous of being thought a neutral, as the character most suitable to that spirit of reconcilement I have professed all along. Agreeably with this view I may now proceed to examine, what there is conformable between the discoveries of Reason and Revelation, and how far they support, illustrate, and strengthen each other; if perchance I may produceso mething thereby that may be styled either a Christian Philosophy, or a rational Christianity.

Not that I can expect to please every body by making this attempt: for there are people who seem to have placed the corner stone of their faith in that text. He that is not with us is against us, and he that gathereth not with us scattereth. With such there is no medium to be preserved; a favourable word spoken of any they do not like, is taken for a declaration of hostility against themselves; as if it were high treason in religion and philosophy to drink a pretender's health. They

are

are more eager to run down an adversary, than to labour at their own improvement, as being the less troublesome task; and more afraid lest another should attain any good thing, than that themselves should miss of it. For seeking their credit rather by differing from others than by their intrinsic merit, they cannot hear with patience whatever tends to lessen that difference, which they strive to widen as far as possible: so that he who presumes to doubt of a single truth, must be a heretic, an infidel, a man of no principles; and he that believes a single point without a sufficient warrant to their liking, must be a bigot, an enthusiast, a crafty designer upon the liberties of mankind. Persons of this cast are not to be worked upon by calm reasoning; passion and positiveness are the engines to be employed in dealing with them: so I look upon them as quite out of my province; the best I can hope for is to be taken no notice of, or if they must place me in the light of an enemy, I would chuse to stand equally so in the eyes of both parties, esteeming it less disparagement to be thought a scatterer, than to gather firebrands with either side.

But there are many of a different turn, who judging of opinions by their inherent lustre, do not want a foil to set them off; nor lie under temptation to depreciate what they reject,

reject, in order to magnify what they adopt; therefore they are candid and favourable to those who seem at widest variance from them, glad to find them less unreasonable than they had imagined, and ready to interpret every thing for the best; firm in their own sentiments, yet still better satisfied to find them coincide with those of others; wishing well to their opposers, and therefore rejoiced to see the opposition reduced to a narrower compass, esteeming their own tenets beneficial, and therefore better pleased the more of them can be made appear embraced in substance by such as seemed to reject them in words. Persons of this character will be likely to lend me an attentive ear, and wish me success how little soever they may expect, or I can promise it: but as they stand at present divided in two different camps, it will be expedient to have a little discourse with each of them separately, before I enter upon my attempt to accommodate matters between both: but in so doing I must proceed upon the principles peculiar to each, hoping the others will not be scandalized at me for supposing the possibility of truth in what they have pronounced false, but consider me, not as laying down any opinion of my own, but using what the schoolmen call arguments to the man.

2. And

2. And first I shall address myself to those who hold the reality of revelations, and genuineness of those records by which they have been handed down to our times. These they will acknowledge proceeded from the God of love and truth, who had no end of his own to serve therein, but gave them in pure kindness to mankind: or if they suppose the advancement of his own glory to have been a motive, yet they will hardly imagine he does any thing for his glory detrimental to his creatures: but rather that his power and his wisdom were so great, as to make the same means work out the purposes both of Love and Glory. So that the benefit of mankind, if not the sole thing designed yet was designed in every dispensation of Providence, as well extraordinary as ordinary: and we may say the same of all divine institutions, as we are taught to believe of one in particular, That man was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man.

The next thing to be considered is, in what manner we will conceive that benefit to be operated, whether by a new virtue and efficacy annexed to certain institutions by omnipotence, or by the effect they must naturally have upon the minds and conduct of such as practise them. I hope I shall not give offence, if I am unwilling to admit any thing

that

that looks like charm and magic in Religion; for he that made us and knows minutely all the springs of our composition, has no need to give a supernatural energy to things insignificant, but can find methods of management suited to the nature and condition of his creatures: therefore shall presume that whatever commands come from God are such, as, if we were able to discern their expedience, we should see it prudent to follow the courses they direct to, although they had not been enjoined; so that we might regard his precepts as issuing from wisdom rather than authority, as advices of one who knows what is best for us, rather than edicts of one whom we durst not disobey, were we of so happy a temper as always to take advice without the dread of authority to enforce it. From hence it follows that reason and nature are the same thing as divinity, that whoever should perfectly understand one, must understand both, and every step of real proficiency in either is an advance towards the other.

It has been said by a prelate of no small reputation in the Church, the late Bishop of London, that Christianity was a republication of natural Religion; now if I were to draw the same inference therefrom that has been drawn before, to wit, that it is as old as the creation, and consequently contains nothing

nothing material more than might have been discovered by human sagacity, I know it will be objected that in this republication are inserted additions of new matters not to be found in the first edition: but I know not how to remove the objection, for I can muster up no arguments even to persuade myself that the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and operations of the Holy Spirit, could ever have been reached by the strongest efforts of human reason. Nevertheless, let us examine whether this overthrows our former supposion, that all dispensations of heaven are grounded upon the condition of human nature, and their efficacy dependent thereon: for nature is not what it was when the law of reason was first written upon the understanding, therefore may require fresh additions which were needless before.

I suppose it will be allowed that if man had not rendered himself obnoxious to punishment by his fall, he would have needed no redemption, and consequently no knowledge of the mysteries whereby it might be effected: had his understanding not been darkened, he would have wanted no enlightening from above: had his will retained its native vigour, a divine assistance to second his endeavours

deavours had been superfluous. So that these additions, though never discoverable by the best exerted industry, yet the expedience of them was founded upon the nature of man: not indeed that wherein he was created, but his present corrupted nature. Wherefore the study of This conduces to the more perfect understanding of Them, or at least enables us to make the better application of them to our uses: as a physician ought to know the nature of the disorder and present habit of his patient, before he can administer the remedies he has in store.

Then for that part which is barely a republication, why should we expect mischief from the exercise of reason? so far as this part extends, we may say without offence, that Christianity is as old as the creation: the perfection of morality is still the same it ever was, the book of nature wherein were written the essences of right and wrong, lies open before us without erasement, or variation in the pages, since their first impression; but our faculties are altered, our vision contracted, and our language divided into a Babel of tongues, so that we cannot take in the whole winding periods containing a long series of causes and effects, nor pursue remote and intermediate relations to one conclusion; and

when

when we do read the substance we sometimes express it in terms contradictory to those employed by one another.

Wherefore a republication might be expedient to new model the ancient text into a conciser form, suitable to our comprehension, which wanted particular rules and precepts that might put us upon measures we did not discern the prudence of: and to fix a certain standard of language, which might render our intercourse among one another more commodious and profitable. Nevertheless, it will scarce be doubted that these rules and precepts have a real foundation in right reason and nature, therefore all fair examination of them upon these bottoms, ought with more justice to excite our hopes than our alarms: and since we know how variously men turn their thoughts, how diversly they connect their ideas, and express themselves upon the same sentiments, it can as little be doubted that there may be a mixture of conformity in opinions seemingly the most opposite; and that every discovery of this is a step towards union, and towards promoting the cause of truth.

I remember to have heard the same good Bishop declare from the pulpit, that we must not judge of the strength of human reason by the works we see now performed by it, because

cause the truths of the Gospel have insensibly infused a degree of their own lustre, and soundness into the present moral philosophy: and if I may be permitted to add any thing from my own experience to so great an authority, I think I have found on conversing with unbelievers, that they have more of the Christian in them than they know of themselves. Therefore we have less reason to be afraid of them than our forefathers had: for by endeavouring to enter for a while into their conceptions, and following their trains of thinking, if we find nothing to learn by them, we have a chance of attracting them without their perceiving it, a little nearer to ourselves than they are willing to come.

3. Nor do the divine oracles show themselves averse to the exercise of reason, we are exhorted to try all things, and told that we may know of the doctrines whether they be from God: but how can we make trial of any thing without the use of our judgment? or how can we know the internal marks of divinity in a doctrine, unless by comparing it with those ideas of God we have learned before from natural Religion? And if the truth were known, I am apt to believe the internal evidence is what determines most men who do not take up their opinions upon trust: for the external of all kinds has been so perplexed

by

by subtile disputations pro and con, that it requires a compass of reading, few have opportunity to go through, to be masters of the argument; but according as they think well or ill of the doctrine, they admit the slightest, or reject the strongest evidence that can be produced to support it.

We may gather further from the style and manner of the Scriptures that they were not intended to supersede the use of human reason, but rather as helps encouraging us to employ it with more alacrity. They are delivered in detached precepts which require judgment to methodize, and form them, together with our natural notices, to strike out a regular system of conduct. They give contradictory rules, enjoining us to brotherly love, to diligence and industry; yet commanding us to hate father and mother, wife and children, and to take no thought for the morrow: for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: things not to be reconciled, nor indeed understood, without sober thought and rational construction. Others unnatural and impracticable. If a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left, if he would take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also: until opened by the key of reflection upon human frailty, they appear to contain within, not directions for our ordinary conduct,

duct, but admonitions to beware that our natural appetites do not get the mastery over us, teaching us not so much what we are to do, as what we ought to render ourselves capable of doing. Others delivered in Riddles and Parables, so that seeing we shall not see, and hearing we shall not understand, unless by using our best wits to dig out their latent meaning.

In short the figurative style running throughout the sacred words, evidently supposes a fund of knowledge previously laid in from other sources: for figures touch neither the imagination nor the understanding, otherwise than by their allusion to things we have been familiarly acquainted with before. Therefore we are told the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive: now what spirit more likely to be meant here as having this vivifying quality than that of sobriety and discretion, nourished up to maturity by due exercise of the several means allotted us for strengthening our faculties? For the Spirit of God will not do all our work for us upon any occasion; it only co-operates with our endeavours, nor will afford us any lights we might have stricken out for ourselves: therefore it behoves us to avail ourselves of our natural lights and powers so far as we can, having no warrant to expect assistance from above

above, until we have tried our strength upon the materials found below.

But it is said human reason is a dangerous thing, having bewildered many in mazes and fatal errors who have trusted to it: this we do not deny, but is not Scripture too a dangerous thing, having driven multitudes into wild extravagances and pernicious notions who have trusted to their own hasty interpretations of it? Therefore, if the abuse of a good thing were an argument for the total disuse of it, we had best do as the Papists would have us, that is, wrap up our Bibles as well as our talent of reason in a napkin, and content ourselves with such scraps of either as they shall please to deal out among us, cooked up after their own fashion. Let us reflect that nature is the work of God as well as Revelation, why then should we despise his gift, and not rather consider it as another Bible dictated from the same mouth? So far as we perceive them to agree, we may rest assured of having the true sense of the author: wherever they seem at variance, it is certain we must have misunderstood one, and a shrewd suspicion we may have mistaken both. What then can we do better than carefully to study both, and pursue the comparison between them, in order to apprize us of our mistake, or remove the

cause of it, by employing them to explain one another? It is too notorious from frequent and fatal experience to be denied, that the moment a man throws aside his reason, he has little further benefit to expect from revelation: for though the necessary duties be written there in such legible characters as that he who runs may read, yet he must have learned to read before, or he may stand poring over them by the hour without being a whit the wiser for all he sees.

Without disparagement to the holy writings I may question whether, strictly speaking, they contain a perfect rule of doctrine and conduct, yet they may do it in a looser sense, as containing all that was wanting to supply the defects of that other rule God had given us before for many of our uses: so the perfect rule is made up by the aggregate of both, but we may be said to find perfection in the former with the same propriety as we are said to find health in the prescriptions of a consummate physician; not that we are to live altogether upon physic, nor expect to support our health without our common food, but because the medicines restore our blood to its purity, and our solids to their original tone, thereby bringing our victuals to agree with us and nourish us.

4. We are told the Gospel was preached to

the poor, that is the vulgar and illiterate, whose opinions, sentiments, and apprehensions fluctuate from time to time: so that what was a proper regimen for the Jews and Gentiles just fallen under the Roman yoke, may not suit the occasions of the poor in those European countries. And it is admitted by divines, that some precepts are not universally binding, but only upon the persons to whom they were delivered: yet they are not distinguished in the text from the general by an introduction of, This is for the disciples, and This for all mankind. How then shall we distinguish them apart, unless by an attention to human nature, discovering to us what is suitable to it, and what is expedient only for particular occasions?

Nor do we scruple to alter the primitive institutions and practices without other warrant than the necessity and reasonableness of the alteration: Christ sent forth his preachers with nothing more than a staff in their hands, and commanded them, into whatsoever house they should enter, to be content with what was set before them, and after his departure, his Apostles maintained themselves by the work of their hands, or the voluntary contributions of the faithful: whereas our Clergy have revenues, honours, and power, established for them by law, which they would find much harder

to defend by the written text, without wresting it violently, than by the expediency of those provisions for the encouragement of learning, and preservation of order and Religion among us. So that if they have a divine right to their possessions, they must derive it through the channels of human nature and good policy, flowing from springs of divine original: and this regulation ought rather to be esteemed a foreign scyon engrafted from the law of reason, than a natural shoot from the given law.

Nor do the laity stand in a different case from the clergy, the landholder having no better gospel-right to his nine parts, than the parson has to his tithe: for what is more frequently and strongly inculcated by Christ himself than a community of goods? how often are we exhorted, as the first preliminary to entering the kingdom of heaven, to sell all we have and give to the poor? by whom must be meant the community, because if this percept were universally practised, we must all become poor, and all be benefitted by the produce arising from every sale. Nevertheless, this reiterated command obeyed for a little while, was quickly broken through, and has long since been totally disregarded: Christians now-a-days possess and defend, and if they can, encrease their several properties

perties without scruple, yet without pretending the authority of any text to exempt themselves, or to declare the precept temporary or local; without other warrant than from common sense and experience of human nature, which manifests to every apprehension the impracticability of such a scheme, and shews its certain tendency to introduce disorder, confusion, and scarcity, to discourage industry, prudence, and commerce, and destroy that subordination necessary to good government. One may presume this impracticable injunction was laid on purpose to make us see the allowableness and necessity of consulting our own judgment, and even suffering it sometimes to carry us directly counter to the written word: yet without infringing its authority, or proving the command unnatural, wherever nature can be found in that perfection whereto the Gospel was designed to restore it.

For a community of goods is no such extravagant notion, but that we can find the convenience and pleasure of it in little friendly societies for a few hours or a few days continuance. When the company sit down to an entertainment, they have not their several messes in private property, but all lies in common before them; each man calls for what he likes, he carves the meats and helps the

the rest in the manner he thinks will be most agreeable. If a number of well-behaved and mutually well-disposed persons set out upon a tour of diversion, perhaps they put their money into one common bag: every one orders what is proper for the company, or what he wants for his own occasions, but not more than he has occasion for; one takes care of the carriages, another looks after the provisions, another manages the remittances, all in their several ways bestir themselves to make things agreeable to the whole, without grudging their trouble.

Now did that glowing brotherly love, that unaspiring humility, that soon-contended moderation, that contempt of pain and labour, that unwearied diligence, that unabating activity, that serenity and chearfulness of temper, which are characteristics of a perfect disciple, prevail among a people, it is easy to imagine they might sit down to the table of nature, or travel the journey of life, which would then become indeed a tour of diversion or rather happiness, more easily and pleasurably with a community of goods, than with any division of property whatever. But we Christians of the present times are not so happily circumstanced: we have a rapaciousness, an engrossing greediness, a desire of superiority, an insensibility to the wants

wants of others, an invincible selfishness, a discontented fretful temper, an averseness to trouble, a dread of labour, a torpid indolence never to be rouzed unless by the necessity of our station, or allurement of avarice and ambition, or at best an industry misplaced upon trifles, or the difficult gratification of some fond humour. Who then cannot see with half an eye that his knowledge of the world, as at present characterized, may lawfully supersede the obligation of a rule that would be excellent for a nation of thorough Christians?

But lest we should think unworthily of our Lawgiver's wisdom, because we find by the event that his Code has not yet produced its full effect upon mankind, let us recollect that he has given the promise of a Comforter to come, who should bring all things to our remembrance, and instruct us in the understanding of all things necessary for our good: which promise had been needless, had he given his first instructions in such fulness and clearness as to suffice for their purpose without further explanation. But how is this Comforter to come? Do we expect him to make a solemn entry among us, or descend in a visible shape like a dove? We have no ground to look for any other express messenger from heaven since the Messiah, who was

to

to close up the great transaction between God and man.

The very nature of the errand seems to require the Comforter should have begun his progress already pursuing it by slow and imperceptible advances: his influence was felt by the Apostles and others in the primitive times, and since no good thing can be done without him, we may conclude from that degree of piety and sound knowledge which has never been wholly lost out of the world, that the like influence has continued all along to our days: yet we cannot reckon him fully come until we shall see the promised effects of his arrival among mankind, in their perfect understanding of moral and natural, as well as revealed Religion. In the mean while, he works upon us invisibly and secretly, like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: for he presents no new objects, but clears our optics to discern those we have already, nor as I observed before, does any thing himself, but co-operates with our endeavours first begun. Therefore it behoves us to use all our faculties, and all means of information from whencesoever we can draw them, as well from the works, as the word of God; comparing them together with the best exercise of our judgment,

as

as the most likely method to put ourselves in a way of obtaining his assistance.

5. I shall next pass over to the other camp, where I must take up principles directly opposite to those I proceeded upon before; for when one goes upon the errand of peace making, one must not contradict nor thwart, but say the things that will please. Therefore I must now look upon Revelation as incredible, and that what has been palmed upon the world for such, was either the inventions of crafty politicians, or the delusions of enthusiasts. For it is necessary to assign the latter a joint share in the performance, because the propagators of the new system were a set of such simple illiterate ignorant creatures, appearing to have followed the present impulse in all they did, that it is impossible to imagine them guilty of any deep laid scheme or fine spun artifice, nor can we carry our suspicion of craft any further than during the Jewish dispensation.

In this apprehension of things we may observe by how many gradual advances, by what a long and complicated tissue of various causes the Religion of mankind was brought into its present form; the rise of a people from one stock, their singular averseness to intermingle among other nations, the original foundation, and subsequent changes

of

of their government, their family attachment, the occurrences befalling them, their prosperities and distresses, the craft of politicians, the exigencies of state, the circumstances of situation, the delusion of enthusiasts, the credulity of a mob, the hasty zeal and passions of ignorant persons, all concurred in the great work. Now unless we allow chance an equal share in the administration of affairs throughout the world, we must needs ascribe this extraordinary concatenation of causes to the hand of God, in the same sense as we would any other producing an important event. For how much soever we may esteem it beneath his Majesty to concern himself with little matters, this is of two extensive an influence to imagine it passing without his regard. The nations of Europe are now mostly Christian, and when we consider that Mahometism is an excrescence, or corruption of Christianity, perhaps as well deserving the name, as some systems that still retain it, we must allow that either in its purity or its corruptions, it has spread over the whole civilized world: besides that we know not what opinions may have been adopted from thence by the few nations still remaining heathen. Shall we then admit that God cares for what affects the condition of empires and cities, but refuse him cogni-

zance

zance of that which has operated upon all mankind?

But it may be alleged there is a distinction to be taken between things appointed and permitted, that delusion and superstition being evils ought to be ranked among the latter, which we cannot, without prophaneness, imagine to be God's doing, though we know they could not have happened without his knowledge and acquiescence. Suppose them then evils, yet we know that God permitteth none unless in order to bring forth greater good therefrom: and though the permission of evil be a divine prerogative which we must not presume to imitate, yet where we cannot remedy the evil, it becomes us to examine its nature and tendency, to study what good was designed to be produced thereby, what profit it may be turned to, and lend our helping hand to promote the work of God.

But why must we need suppose Religion to be an evil, or to have thrown mankind into a worse condition than they had stood in without it. Are the Chickasaws, the Twigtwees, and the Hottentots, which are reported to have none, more humane, more enlightened, better policied, or provided with the conveniencies of life, than those nations who have some kind of worship among them? The best lawgivers have found it necessary

necessary to inculcate the awe of an invisible Power, as serviceable to put a check upon men's conduct in matters that cannot fall under cognizance of the magistrate: wherefore, as the worst government is better than none, the reign of Nero or Domitian preferable to anarchy, so the worship of a stock or stone is better than no worship at all. But it will scarce be denied that Mahometism surpasses the worship of idols, or that the doctrines prevailing in our own country are more rational than Mahometism: why then should we scruple to rank among the providential events described in the last Chapter, or esteem the methods whereby they were introduced to have been of divine appointment, as marked out among the courses of nature and fortune, in the original plan?

If we persuade ourselves that natural reason might serve us better, in God's name let us try the strength of it; for I am no more for discarding reason than any other means of information in my power: but am not ashamed to learn of anybody, even though I were sure he knew less than myself; for still he may know something I do not know, or did not think of, or may suggest a hint I may improve to advantage. But reason has been tried, and though carrying some few men of cool judgment, and great leisure, considerable lengths

lengths, has been found insufficient to conduct the busy world, nor compleatly sufficient even for the studious: for there have been as many schisms and heresies in philosophy as religion, the one leading into as dangerous errors as the other.

Neither could philosophy grow to maturity without the seed sown by the nurse and the priest, for how much soever we may become afterwards wiser than our teachers, the most profound speculatist can scarce imagine he should have run the same lengths of refinement, had he been bred up among the Hottentots: but it is the solicitude for futurity, the persuasion of an invisible nature, the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong, inculcated into us from our childhood, that puts us upon our enquiries and the exertion of our faculties. Therefore, without shutting our eyes either against reason or popular opinion, we may employ them usefully to assist and correct one another: if not because needful in private prudence, at least to render us better capable of doing benefit to others.

6. The interests of the learned and vulgar are blended together, for we live by society, and our science, as well as our conveniencies of life, however worked up by ourselves, are made out of materials prepared for us by other

other hands. What though the Sophists of Greece claimed an all-sufficiency of knowledge, because they made the cloak upon their back and ring upon their fingers? yet I suppose the cloth was spun, and the gold refined from the ore by the ignorant and illiterate, and according as they performed their work, the cloak and the ring would be more or less fine and durable. In like manner, whatever systems we may strike out for ourselves, still the rudiments we set out upon, the application and turn of mind we proceeded with, were derived to us by education, example, and sympathy. And if we be so lucky as to reach the limits of sound philosophy, we shall see plainly by the light of that country, that the treasures found there are not to be locked up for private use, but rendered as universally beneficial as possible by such ways as are feasible.

Therefore it is incumbent upon us to regard popular opinions and customs, for by them we may best serve the general uses: were we assuredly wiser than convocations and synods we could not open the sources of our wisdom to the world, we could only deal out the streams in salutary precepts, exhorting them to a reverence of the divine Majesty, dependence on his Providence, honesty in their dealings, and industry in their callings, which

which they must take upon the credit of our authority; but what authority can we expect with those who are no judges of our extraordinary merit? Therefore, how fortunate or rather providential is it, that the same things are recommended by the doctors of the Church? and how imprudent would it be to weaken their authority, which is the sole engine we have wherewith to work our honest purposes? For the end crowns the work, and in many cases the intention will sanctify the deed: it is a great matter if we can compass what is right, though we should not be able to explain the why, but employ any why that will best go down with the people.

As much as we may laugh at grandmother Eve and her apple, or the romantic perfection of Paradise, certain it is that human nature and human understanding are now far from being perfect; and though it should not be owing to that cursed pippin having spoiled our constitution, we are manifestly a weakly, distempered race of mortals, who must be managed with art and medicine to make our natural aliment digest. We have no experience of doing any thing unless by immediate application of our bodily powers thereto, or by setting other persons at work whom we can command, nor of giving information otherwise than by the words of our mouth:

so the generality conceive of God as performing his works by direct exertions of omnipotence, or the ministry of his angels, or declaring his mind by secret influences or revelations. Nor is it necessary they must be superstitious herein, for superstition is relative, that which would be such in one man being none in another, according to the extent of their comprehension.

Philosophy shews the reason of ascribing some events, some rules of action, and some truths, to divine original; but philosophy cannot explain to common capacity the long chain of second causes lying between the first operation and visible phenomena: therefore it is no encouragement of superstition to shorten the line for each man to a length that will just lie upon the scale of his imagination, nor does superstition begin, until you cut off a part of the line that his scale might have borne. The necessities of life demand our attention among sensible objects to provide for them; reason directs to apply a part of our thoughts to our spiritual concerns: some few may be led by inclination or habit to employ the due proportion this way occasionally, but it is easy to guess this dictate of reason would be generally neglected without certain stated times appropriated to the performance of it. Perhaps the philosopher might

might think one day in ten enough, or one in five but just enough, or he would certainly see that Wednesday might do as well as Sunday, but if it would not do better, why should he wish to put men out of their way? or who would mind the philosopher so far, as to throw aside his common business every Wednesday to please him? Nor need he disturb himself at the reasons given for observance of one day in seven, because God rested from his works, or the Resurrection happened on such a particular day: for these are good reasons if they be such as will weigh. And if there be some so gross and narrow-minded as to imagine an intrinsic sacredness in the day, yet if they are likewise of such an indolent dilatory disposition as never to do what may be done as well another time as now, it would do hurt to undeceive them.

The like may be said of other customs esteemed sacred; if not valuable in themselves, they may lead into practices and sentiments which it might be impossible to make manifest to every eye; so that men, while following a shadow cast by skilful honest hands, may be enabled to catch a solid substance they know nothing of, nor would be persuaded to lay hold on. There is this advantage in all discipline, even though practised

in trifles, that it inures men to order and rule, and to resist a present fancy, and renders them more susceptible of benefit from the knowledge of what is right, whenever they can attain it. Therefore, if we consider Religion only as the scaffolding of reason, it is well worth our attention; for whether human nature in its present condition be an unfinished building, or the ruins of an ancient structure, it requires the same treatment in either case; let us then examine carefully whatever remains of the foundation, and use what helps we can to erect any thing solid thereupon; when the edifice shall be compleated, it may serve for all our u[illegible] but any one that contemplates the p[illegible] state of it, may see that it is much to[illegible] to strike the scaffolding yet.

7. But it is suggested, [illegible] are propagated amo[illegible] to reaso[illegible] of morality, contrived by designing persons solely for their own profit a[illegible] aggrandizement. What then! may not we pick out the corn from the chaff and is it not worth while to sift them carefully that we may know how to distinguish them rather than cast away both out of wantonness or laziness? If we find any thing manifestly superstitious, we shall do well to oppose or qualify it by a rational construc-

tion,

tion, always taking with us the caution given in the last section, to remember that superstition it relative, for else we may chance to do mischief by our indiscretion. And if some crafty persons have imposed upon mankind, why should we not endeavour to turn their cannon against them by drawing a better conclusion from the premises whereon they build those doctrines? for they will not avow their selfishness; whatever their real intention be, they profess to labour in the redemption from sin and wickedness: let us then take them at their word, and study to do sincerely what they profess; whatever we can clearly show to have a contrary tendency we may safely reject, they dare not contradict us if they would.

The fund from whence they pretend to draw all their supplies, runs in such figurative expressions as are susceptible of different colours; experience shows how many pernicious and contrary interpretations have been given to the same texts, and the like experience shews what rational doctrines and rules of conduct have been supported upon them: therefore, without troubling our heads about the design wherewith any thing was written or taught, let us strive to turn every thing in a manner that may prove advantageous to the interests of sound reason and

morality. Though Religion were no more than an artifice to enslave reason and serve private ends, under pretence of public benefit, yet had we the like zeal to set our wits and industry at work in a good cause as we suppose others to have in a bad one, it might not be impossible to find honest artifices for restoring reason to her liberty and doing a real benefit to mankind, under an appearance of supporting the doctrines esteemed sacred.

But why need we judge so unfavourably of men, as to pronounce them actuated solely by selfish views in every thing they do redounding to some private advantage of their own? Is honesty of so repellant a nature as to render it incapable of ever joining with policy? Can we never serve our neighbour without sacrificing our own interests? We find most characters contain a mixture of good and bad: cunning seldom so engrosses the whole man as to leave no room for the moral senses, nor does his partiality for himself exclude all love of truth or regard for others. What if Moses set out upon his enterprise with a prospect of raising himself to royal power, are all politicians such vile creatures as to care nothing for anybody else? if the public good comes in competition with their private interests we may guess which

which they will pursue: but where not inconsistent therewith, what should hinder but they may bestow a thought upon it? It is most natural to imagine they will take it up for a secondary aim, because serving to raise them in esteem and reputation with the people. Why then might not he proceed partly upon a real solicitude for the welfare of his nation, giving them such regulations as might produce order, polity, and good manners among them; and even framing his inventions upon observation of their character, in such manner as to lead them imperceptibly into sentiments and practices conducive to their happiness?

And for the spiritual directors of our own times, though we may allow them subject to human infirmity, which will unavoidably give a bias to self-interest, yet we can hardly believe them all joining in support of a mere politic imposture, discerned in their consciences to be such. We may know some among them of serious and even scrupulous characters, having an abhorrence of injury to truth or their fellow-creatures; and if we must lay it down as incontestable, that they weigh their external evidences in the scale of prejudice which gives a weight to what had none before: this prejudice must arise in the best of them from their opinion of the internal,

ternal, which it may be presumed they judge of in the same manner as other people judge of other things, by observation on the natural tendency of rules, and experience of their effects; wherein they certainly are liable to error, yet surely not incapable of ever discerning the truth.

Why then should we so wrap ourselves up in the conceit of our own consummate accomplishment, as to think there is nothing can be learned from another, or to despise in the lump a whole set of regulations, established by the wisdom of politicians, and approved by well-intentioned persons of good natural, and improved understandings? and not rather give them a thorough examination, for the chance of finding an expedience in some of them we were not aware of? For expedience is the thing to be principally regarded; the want of looking for this in measures leads both sides into mistakes; the weakly righteous finding certain forms recommended by the judicious, and perceiving their good effects where practised, conclude them to have an intrinsic value, and if men of profound learning, they hunt for scholastic subtilties to support their notion: the weakly rational, discerning the fallacy of this intrinsic value, conclude as hastily there is no value in them at all. Whereas both may be

in

in the wrong, for things insignificant in themselves may be productive of a solid and substantial benefit: even error is sometimes expedient for people who will take a bad reason for doing a good thing, when they cannot see the force of a good reason, provided the error do not draw on mischiefs greater than the service it does.

8. Nobody can deny that schemes of avarice, ambition, and tyranny over the very thoughts, as well as persons, and properties of men have been erected upon the basis of Religion, which is apt to give men a prejudice against the root that can bear such pernicious fruits. But we should consider that our antagonists may retort the argument upon us, for reason too has been found to make wild work in some hands, and if it has never done such extensive mischief, it was for want of strength to take hold of the populace: therefore, if religion, which has by far the greater innate vigour, can be brought to assist in the purposes of reason, much more may be done with than without such help.

But it is unfair to take the character of either from their appearance under the disguises wherewith they have been covered: when made subservient to the purpose of private passions, which, it is their proper office

to

to regulate and control, they become corrupted: in this state they lose their essence, being no longer their real selves. The Cynics, the Epicureans and the Pyrrhonians, were much such philosophers, as the Gnostics, the Muggletonians and the Moravians, were Christians; and he that should think to form his judgment of Reason or Religion from these patterns, would do as wisely as if he expected to discover the alimentary qualities of fruits by analyzing such as were rotten. To have a true idea of things one ought to know the best they are capable of, which can never be learned from them in their depravities, nor without examining them in the fairest lights, and observing to what uses they are applicable.

Philosophy may be styled the art of marshaling the ideas in the understanding, and Religion that of disciplining the imagination. Now it is the perfection, not perversion, of a method that constitutes the art, which title no more belongs to delusion in the one, than to sophistry in the other; or if these must be called arts, they are distinct arts from that which they profess; so that we shall pass our judgment never the surer upon That, for being acquainted with the mischiefs of Them. It has been made appear upon several occasions in the course of this work,

that

that imagination bears as great a sway in our motions as understandings; That must execute what This projects, or nothing will be done further than in speculation.

It is well known there are persons who can give excellent counsel but can never follow it themselves: these people do not want understanding, but they want an incitement to practise what they know; which is to be gotten by habit and discipline, rather than calm argumentation: so their knowledge is of less benefit to themselves than to others, the bent of whose imagination and desire is strongly turned upon doing what is right. On the other hand, many who cannot discover the rectitude of measures, may yet be brought to pursue such of whose rectitude they are persuaded: but then this persuasion must be worked by authority, example, or custom, upon those who are not capable of rational conviction; and the wisest of us scarce being able to investigate every thing to the fountain head, it will be safest to follow custom and authority, in matters wherein we have not a full and clear discernment, and consequently to be wished for our own sakes that authority and custom may direct the right way.

Wherefore it well deserves our pains to study attentively that art whereby desire, opinion, apprehension,

apprehension, and all the family of imagination may be managed, in order to learn from thence how that vigorous faculty may be turned to execute the purposes of reason, for by bringing them to join forces in the same work, we may do good service as well to ourselves as to our fellow-creatures. And if we do not like the method of practising this art now taken among us, yet considering how hard it is to break through established customs and riveted opinions, we may find it more feasible to work good purposes out of them, than to do good by overthrowing them. What though they had been first introduced and since maintained by designing persons for sinister ends, this would not hinder our trying to make them answer better ends than were designed.

Yet I do not know why we should confine our thoughts to the machinations of men who are but instruments in the hand of Heaven in all they do, turned this way or that by the provision of causes pre-ordained from above. But the system they have propagated spreads too extensive an influence, as we observed before, to doubt of its being among the appointments of Providence, which we know frequently employs the follies, the passions, the errors, the wickedness of men to accomplish purposes they know not of.

The

The ways of Providence are often unaccountable, conducting surely to an aim by means seeming the most unlikely to attain it, and though such means having been used, will not justify us in joining against our judgment with whatever we have in our power to alter, yet where we cannot put things out of their course, it would be in vain to kick against the pricks; our business here is to submit, not to resist; to learn, not to judge. For we may presume that Providence knows the propriety of measures somewhat better than ourselves: therefore, if we set ourselves to study diligently the measures it takes, their effects and tendencies, it is not impossible we may find uses in things appearing insignificant and nugatory, expedience in what we thought at first pernicious, good fruits growing from roots of an evil quality, and salutary provisions in what we had apprehended to be evils.

9. Having now apologized with both parties for my attempt, I may hope for their candid reception of what I shall offer in the prosecution of it, and that they will believe me a well wisher to both in all matters that do not tend to injure the other. As I have professed a strict neutrality, I shall not wittingly take part on either side, but make it my business to search for such points as may be

be agreed to consistently with both their principles; wishing I could bring them both to join under one banner, because conceiving more good might be done to mankind by their united efforts, than by their divisions: but if this be too romantic a scheme, at least desirous to render them less odious and contemptible to one another, and less negligent of what hurt they may do among by-standers by their scuffles.

I have worked hitherto solely upon the fund of natural reason; labouring the best I could to make my building solid and coherent in its parts. I have quoted authority as occasion offered, not so much in support of my edifice, as with a view to my present design of shewing a similitude of structure therewith. I proceed now to examine the opinions commonly taught among us by the lights I have already gathered, in order to discover what they contain conformable with the productions of human reason, and bring both to coincide so far as they will bear; esteeming that the truest interpretation of a doctrine, which appears most consonant to reason, and that the surest decision of reason which stands confirmed by the doctrines received. In doing this, one must manage with calmness and caution, not wresting either of them violently to serve the purposes of the other,

as

as your zealots of all kinds too commonly do, but bending them gently as one would a tender twig, so as not to bruise, nor injure, nor rend it from the parent plant

The incorporation seems likeliest to succeed by following that method the gardeners call grafting by approximation, wherein the branches of two stems planted near each other, are brought gradually to approach until they touch: they then are bound close under one ligature, in order to make them grow together; but this they will not do, unless some of the bark and rind of both be pared off, and their sides flatted and smoothed, so that the sap vessels may open into one another, the vital juices mingle, and the circulation mutually communicate between them. When found to have thoroughly coalesced, one is cut off below, and the other above the juncture; whereby the remaining shoot will become a branch of the other tree: and this may be done upon either of them at pleasure, according to the gardener's own wants, or the demands of his customers.

If something of the like process were tried upon Philosophy and Religion, I apprehend they might both receive considerable improvement: for by piercing through the outward forms and idioms into the sap and spirit, which might mutually assimilate by degrees

degrees, the coolness of the one would temper the warmth of the other, and in return derive a fructifying vigour therefrom, to the great advantage of both. For Reason is a very indifferent bearer, its juices viscid, and its circulation slow, producing leaves, and blossoms, and knotty excrescences copiously enough, but seldom bringing any serviceable fruit to maturity without great advantages of soil, painful cultivation, and continual tendency. Whereas Religion is a prodigious bearer, oftener redundant than barren in the poorest grounds: but the strong tone of its vessels and its precipitant circulation drive on the juices before well digested, and are apt to throw crudities into the fruit, which will like some pears, frequently contain more of woody concretion than wholesome pulp.

As to the choice of either to be saved for the stem or the stock, this may be left to discretion: the studious man will probably graft Religion upon Philosophy for his own use, but the contrary for the generality. In both cases, provided he employ healthy stocks of the genuine kind, uncankered with prejudice or peculiarity, and the inoculation be skilfully performed, the fruits will be the same in substance, only differing a little in colour and flavour, and perhaps the leaves and twigs differently shaped and set on: so that however

ever appearing two distinct species to the common beholder, they will have the same nutritive effect upon the constitution of the user. And for our better encouragement to endeavour the association we may remark that the ends proposed by both to our attainment are similar.

Philosophy leads us by the contemplation of nature to discover the power and goodness of God, whose views never terminate upon evil, whose universal Providence connects all his perceptive creatures in one common interest: whence we are to regard ourselves as citizens of the world, promoting its benefit in that little part of it wherewith we have intercourse, and encreasing the quantity of happiness in any subject wherever we can. Christianity instructs us to do all things for the glory of God, to rest our dependence upon him, to behold him in the amiable light of an indulgent father ordering all things for our good, to consider ourselves as members of Christ, which is but another phrase to express citizens of the world, he being the first-born and head of every creature, who are his members, and fellow members of one another; to love our neighbour as ourselves, nor to stop there, but pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, to feed our enemy

if

if he hunger, and if he thirst to give him drink, One recommends prudence and benevolence as the two pillars whereon to erect our rules of conduct: the other advises to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. One warns us to beware of appetite and passion, nor ever suffer them to usurp upon the authority of reason: the other exhorts to subdue our fleshly lusts, and bring the carnal man under subjection to the spiritual. One describes the passage through matter as a short excursion leading to our natural residence in the society of pure spirits: the other calls life a journey through the vale of mortality, and heaven our proper home. In short, the true drift of both is none other than the advancement of happiness among men as well in body as mind: and whatever in either leads aside from that aim, or conduces nothing towards it, may be pronounced spurious or erroneous.

10. Nevertheless, it must be confessed, that Religion contains many things having no immediate relation thereto: it lays great stress upon forms, ceremonies, and strength of persuasion: it seems to enjoin arbitrary precepts, to inculcate the necessity of doctrines merely speculative, to demand assent without conviction or even comprehension of the truths assented

sented to; it takes a compass to attain its end, turning our backs against reason in some parts of the way; it leads the votary along darksome passages, where he must follow implicitly because bidden, without knowing why, or whither going; it speaks in figurative expressions, and gives enigmatical commands, which must be understood with full confidence of having attained the right interpretation, at the hazard of all our hopes and all our happiness.

We are told the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive: but how have doctors differed, and damned one another for their adherence to the express words, or the latent meaning! And even in the Parts remaining undisputed, it is often difficult to discern which is form, and which is substance directly operating to salvation, or remotely necessary to lead into the way of it. So that it may be compared to a Walnut, divided into such multiform quarters as require great nicety to peel without hurting the nut: if you go to pare it with a knife as you would an apple, you will take off part of the kernel, and leave part of the skin. Nay, considering the great difference of constitutions, and how many there are that cannot digest the kernel without the skin, nor will swallow the latter unless you persuade them it is kernel, it may

be almost impossible to manage so dexterously as neither to do real hurt to the weak, nor disgust the strong.

These considerations may warn us sufficiently what slippery ground we are going to enter upon, where we must not tread with fear and trembling, nor yet with rashness; but endeavour to maintain an unruffled courage well compatible with vigilant caution, though not with terror and trepidation. He that is obliged to walk upon the edge of a precipice must overcome his fears, or they will certainly throw him down; or if he suffer his thoughts to fall off their guard for a moment, the danger will be as great. Therefore shall resolve to proceed with a circumspect, unbiassed freedom, solicitous not to give offence, more solicitous to do no real damage any where, but unsolicitous of that favour which arises from partiality to the prejudices of others. But since freedom has been so grossly misunderstood as to be taken by some for perverseness and obstinacy, and placed by others of confined views and narrow prejudices, in a bold opposition against whatever they do not like, it will be expedient to know something of its genuine nature, before we venture upon the exercise of it: and because it is of no small avail towards keeping us in the right way, to observe the

turnings,

turnings on either hand that lead astray from it, we shall bestow some time upon examination of the principal hinderances, that ordinarily obstruct the course of a true freedom of enquiry and judgment.

CHAP. VIII.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT.

EDUCATION, example, and custom, are the first channels of knowledge and accomplishment; it is these make the difference between the civilized and the savage: for neither reason nor history leave room to imagine a particular virtue in climates, inspiring judgment and science into the inhabitants born therein with the air they breathe, nor that there are not those in the most barbarous countries, who strike out as large improvements as can be made by a single person unaided by his neighbours. But single persons can make very little advances of themselves, nor does the difference between one people and another arise from any other cause, than the mutual communication of lights among them. The experience of those who

have gone before us, conveyed by instruction, shortens our road to knowledge, and by lifting us over a considerable part of the way, leaves us in fresh vigour and sprits to pursue the rest, or run further lengths beyond. For at our entrance into life every thing is new, every thing unknown, so there is no ground whereon to build a rational conviction, nor other reason to be had for assenting to any thing, than because we were taught it. And the like may be said of any particular art or science, wherein docility is the first requisite enabling us to make a proficiency: for judgment comes from experience, and experience is only gotten by practice: but the ways of practice necessary for gaining experience must be suggested to us, and entered upon without any knowledge of their expedience, unless what we learn from instruction.

But the pleasures, the passions, and the levity of youth, perpetually drawing off their attention, render it necessary to raise up contrary passions for keeping them observant, as likewise for preventing their being bewildered by the many opposite documents abroad in the world: so they are plied with topics of fear and shame, to make them persevere in the truth they have been put into, the peculiar excellence of it is continually chimed in their ears, and great cautions urged to be-

ware

ware of seducers that would lead them astray. And after having followed their guides some time, the ease of acting and thinking in a particular track gives them an habitual liking thereto, and casts a strangeness and uncouthness upon every thing not exactly conformable therewith. Hence we very commonly find, that proficients in all sciences, professions, and ways of life, conceive a prodigious opinion of the trains of thought and courses of practice whereto they have been accustomed, with a sovereign contempt of all others in comparison with their own.

This prejudice arising from education, or where that has been neglected, from some teacher or company happening to gain an ascendant over the mind, is excusable in the vulgar of all ranks, who have no rules nor sentiments, but what were inculcated into them, and are no hinderance to their freedom of thought which they are not capable of exercising; for where there is no power, there is no room either for liberty or restraint. But wanting either leisure or capacity to penetrate below the surface, they dwell upon externals, or catch at some favourite word, such as church, or faith, or grace, or liberty, or reason, or nature, or rectitude, the proper import of which they do not understand: and

if

if they push their zeal to extravagancies, it is more the fault of their leaders than their own, for they would each follow his own way without disturbing one another, where their own passions and interests are not immediately concerned, if not instigated by persons who have private ends to serve, or whimsical humours to gratify upon them. Therefore the sources of narrow-mindedness, considered as a fault of the Will, and not a natural imbecility, must be sought for among such, as were enabled by nature and their situation to have enlarged their understanding beyond the knowledge infused into them by example and precept.

For instruction will not do every thing alone; it can neither be given so fully as to reach every particular case of conduct that may happen, nor so clearly as to leave no hazard of being ever misunderstood: besides that change of circumstances and new scenes of life occurring will require other rules than those we have been provided with, and the best of teachers being fallible, will unavoidably mingle something of error and human imperfection in their system. Therefore he that has eyes to see, as well as ears to hear, must see for himself, as well as listen to what is told him, and employ his private judgment

judgment to understand, to apply, to enlarge, or to correct the learning he has received from education, example, or custom.

But this exercise of private judgment is a very difficult task to manage, and its decisions liable to the same inconveniences, as those made for us by other people: for it being impossible in any science, even in the mathematics, to carry the whole process in our heads whereby we arrived at any truth, we must rest upon the character of assurance we find it bear in our imagination; by which means our own predeterminations come to operate upon us in the same manner with the notions we were bred up in, that is, by their authority. But this authority wants the further use of judgment to rescue us from oppression under it, full as often as the other: for judgment ripens by experience, which we acquire gradually, nor is it uncommon for subsequent experience to give us a very different notion of things from that left upon us by a former. Nor is it always easy to distinguish between what we had discovered ourselves, and what we have imbibed from our teachers, or catched by sympathy from the company we have consorted with; for often forgetting the channels through which our persuasions were derived to us, we regard them as self-evident principles, manifested

by

by a kind of intuitive evidence: whence come the notions of innate ideas, of essential and eternal truths, of inherent rectitude, beauty and laudableness of actions good in themselves, and the like; which are supposed immediate objects of an internal sense, discovering them by a sagacity of discernment, not by investigations of reason, whose business it is rather to defend and enforce, than to weigh or examine them.

The high veneration commonly inculcated for the ways and principles men have been brought up in, becomes transferred to the internal sense as soon as they conceive it opening, that is, as soon as it seems to distinguish the character of truth or expedience, independent on the teacher's authority; especially if it discovers errors and imperfections in the things they have been taught, for then it appears more venerable than that they were habituated to venerate. This veneration for their sagacity of discernment, and the predeterminations fixed thereby, not unfrequently grows into a strong passion which casts shackles upon the thought: for innocent mistake or ignorance may proceed from other causes, but it is always some secret passion that infringes upon our liberty, forcing us into a train of thought conformable to its interests, and restraining us from looking upon

upon whatever seems to endanger them. It would be endless to hunt after all the extravagancies this passion leads into, but when it happens to take the road of Religion, it divides into two principal branches: one upon confidence of knowing the road better and running greater lengths in it than any body else, and this ends in Bigotry; the other of having found the beaten road hollow, as running along fairy ground, with a resolution of steering as wide from it as possible, and this draws off into what is usually called Freethinking

2. But how far asunder soever these two branches may point, one may observe a resemblance in the manner of laying them out, and a mixture of each other's character in the projectors. For the bigot is a freethinker with respect to the doctors of his Church, delighting to censure their expositions and practices, as deviations from the primitive purity: and the freethinker is a bigot to certain favourite principles, the infallibility of his reason, the self-evidences of abstracted truths, the absurdity of divine interpositions, and the touchstone of ridicule, nor will hear a word that should be spoken of them disrespectfully.

Both are alike presumptuous, arrogant, self-sufficient, indissolubly wedded to their own peculiar

peculiar notions, confiding in their sagacity of discerning truths intuitively; judging of their merit by comparison, and therefore looking upon the rest of mortals with a contemptuous pity, thereby to heighten their own superiority over them; impatient of contradiction, scorning to learn as implying imperfection, but aiming to draw all others after them; ambitious of shining everywhere, and appearing persons of consequence, disdainful of common atchievements but pushing always at extraordinary lengths.

The views of both lie confined within a scanty compass, for they care little to observe human nature, to study the passions and affections, their proper balance, their uses and abuses, to consult the general convenience, to suit their doctrines to the capacities, and the various stations of life wherein men are engaged: but frame their system, both of opinion and conduct, agreeably to their own situation and usages, and then expect that every body should conform strictly to their plan. They make mighty pretence of zeal for the public good, but then it extends only to such of the public as chime in with their schemes; for all the rest they detest or despise.

Both entertain narrow conceptions of the supreme Being, taking their idea of him from human

human affections, and human understanding, and confidently persuading themselves that their picture is an exact copy of the original: thus depressing him to their own level as a shorter way than striving to imitate his perfections, and depreciating their fellow-creatures until they conceit themselves raised far above the midway between them and their Creator. Both agree to place the whole sum and substance of Religion in forms and creeds; which the one therefore regards as the sole thing essential, in contempt of practical sentiments and the common duties of their station; while the other, finding no essential value in them, concludes unfavourably of Religion itself, as containing nothing solid or useful.

3. The bigot has been carefully trained up, or terrified by the rantings of some gifted preacher into a serious and industrious temper; he plies close to his lessons, and gains applause for his diligence and proficiency; he hears grievous lamentations at the universal depravity and blindness of mankind, is perpetually taught the doctrine of the straight gate, and put in mind how happy it is that he has the means and disposition of mind afforded for entering it. He looks upon it as his indispensable duty to attain a higher degree of perfection than ever yet was attained, at least since the primitive times; he affects

to

to talk meanly of himself, as unable to do or think any thing that is good, but that God will give his abundant grace to such as call upon him earnestly. He sighs and groans at the infatuation of mankind, as giving a real grief and vexation to the Holy Spirit, whose fondness thereby becomes more strongly attached to those very few that seek him, and he is sure none seek more earnestly than himself: so of course he must be the prime favourite of Heaven, to whom he is become necessary, because without him there would be no true worship in the world.

He shows a strong propensity to work miracles; but the inquisitiveness of the times not permitting, he deals largely in secret whispers, private illuminations, and inward feelings, wherein nobody can contradict him. Providence seems to have nothing else to do than to tend his minute motions, and every little turn of chance respecting him, is an interposition of Heaven. He thinks himself humble, but sees none comparable to himself in that only valuable quality, a zeal for the divine glory: if he has any sincere wishes for the good of others, they are overwhelmed by the joy of gathering a multitude of followers, whom he strives to chide and affright into his train, rather than to invite and persuade; for he does all in eagerness and anger, and who-

ever

ever proves refractory he censures, and damns most unmercifully. He penetrates into the secret counsels of Heaven, sees minutely its ways of proceeding, what is a mercy, and what a judgment: for having the spirit of the Lord he must know the mind of the Lord, and be the sure interpreter of his word, which to the carnal-minded, that is, to all other persons, appears in such manner as that seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not understand.

He searches the Scriptures daily, for he talks scarce any other language, hunts perpetually for texts to support his particular persuasions, turns the most foreign so as to make them serve his purpose, introduces them by head and shoulders upon the most trifling occasions, and this he calls searching. He find them inculcate strongly the duties of prayer, of abstinence, of almsgiving, of devout exercises together with a good life: so he pronounces a good life to consist wholly in them, and that crying incessantly, Lord, Lord, is doing the Will of our Father which is in heaven. He would have every body hunt lectures from morning to night, or sing psalms every third hour, or continually ejaculate at their work, or mingle prayers among their diversions, starve themselves both in food and cloathing, but give him all their money

money to dispose of in pious uses and purchase himself more followers and more adoration. He scorns to study human nature, for nature is utterly corrupted by the fall, and we are to act as contrary to it as possible, living in the world as though we were not in the world.

He wants calmness enough to observe that a crooked stick must be bent the contrary way just so much beyond the line, as you expect it will recoil after taking off your hand: so a prudent teacher will enjoin a greater strictness than he wishes should be adhered to, allowing for the recoil of natural appetites, old desires and habits: but he keeps bending on with all his might, until by continual pressure he brings the stick to remain in the opposite curvature. He moves solely by zeal, and is an utter stranger to discretion; nor ever regards what is feasible, but what is right in his own theory. He considers not that there are many necessary professions which require the whole application to fulfil the duties of them, and that men may be pious and useful members of society, without being divines: but having nothing else to do himself, with neither knowledge, genius, nor ability for any other employment, he would persuade all mankind to follow their respective callings only by the by, making divinity

their

their principal study, because then they must all resort to his oracle, from whence alone they can receive it genuine.

4. The freethinker perhaps too has imbibed his principles from the persons among whom he was bred up; or perhaps has been bred up in no principles at all, but catches at any specious pretences suggested to cover him from the shame of following uncontroled appetite and humour, which he calls nature; or it may be, has been educated a little too strictly by persons better versed in the forms and tenets of Religion than the ends they were calculated to answer; but being of a lively, volatile temper, he digests nothing of what is taught him, his lessons become dry, all appears task and burden, and he despairs of ever making the proficiency required of him as an indispensable duty. Under this uneasiness he meets with somebody who, in a confident air talks slightingly of the discipline that has disturbed him, reflects on his teachers as proceeding more by rote than judgment, finds fault with their documents, and perhaps justly in the manner they have been delivered, convinces him that forms and articles have nothing essential in them, that if men would do what they know to be right, performing their duties as members of society, they would want nothing else, and makes

wondrous

wondrous merry with the dogmaticalness of pedants, and the superstitions currently esteemed sacred among the vulgar.

These comfortable discourses, addressed both in the argumentative and ludicrous parts to the good sense of our pupil, well suiting his convenience and sprightly temper, quickly wear off what little reverence he may have remaining for his instructors: he is conscious of having received no benefit from their teaching, nor found any thing deeper than form and words; sees himself wiser than them, and rejoices in the freedom of thought, now at length emancipated from their fetters. But whatever source he derives his notions from, whether education, example of his parents, or accidental insinuations that have gained credit with him by hitting his fancy, he esteems them all his own discoveries: for he will take nothing upon trust, nor otherwise than as hints, until made his own by having the sanction of his judgment. He hates trouble, thinks all painful investigation needless, as tending only to perplex, and makes his decisions easily without scruple or diffidence.

This gives him a superlative conceit of his own understanding, which can discern right and wrong at a glance, for whatever strongly strikes his fancy carries an intrinsic beauty, and

and whatever does not coincide with his ideas, he will venture to say must be absurd in itself: by these marks he distinguishes the essence of things, as the eye distinguishes colours upon inspection. In this faculty he participates of the divine nature, for God is perfect reason, whose intelligence may indeed be somewhat larger in compass, but in kind he will venture to say, must be just the same with his own, for there are no degrees in certainty and intuition, the merest ideot who can just know two and two make four, know that as certain as Newton. He talks much of a nature of things, binding upon the Almighty, and marking out the field for omnipotence to range in, therefore, by knowing that, he knows precisely what God can, or cannot do: but he never vouchsafes to explain what he means by Nature, or what by Things, and if you ask him, he laughs at your stupidity, or when most gracious, tells you, that you will not know, for fear it might undeceive you in some prejudice of education.

He knows nothing of human nature, as if Man was not among the things whose nature is continually in his mouth, but expects that every porter and chairman should discern what is right without instruction or guidance. He never tries to improve the knowledge of mankind or strike out any practical system preferable to those in vogue: whose uses he

takes no pains to examine, nor what inconvenience might ensue if they were abolished without substituting something better in their room. His delight lies wholly in opposition: if men believe nothing that is taught them, it is enough; no matter what else they believe. To build up would be laborious and pedantic, much more to defend such an edifice as he could raise if it should chance to be attacked: so he takes the easier, pleasanter, safer task of pulling down. He loves to pick holes or make them wherever he can, to trip up an adversary at unawares, or find an infirmity in persons of esteemed characters.

He is not so prone to anger as the bigot, except now and then when gravelled in argument, but as utter a stranger to discretion: for he will have his joke in season and out of season, and is never better pleased than in puzzling an illiterate person upon some common article of belief. Ridicule is his trusty weapon, as doing its work much quicker or cleverer than argument, for what cannot stand that touchstone, must needs be absurd: but any queer fellow that tries to joke upon him only makes himself ridiculous for he never sees an absurdity in his own character though pointed out ever so clearly, so sees no joke in any thing said to expose it, and will venture to say he knows what is a good jest,

as

as well as a good reason. He affects to appear mighty full of doubts, but in reality never doubted of any thing: for what he pretends to doubt of, he is absolutely sure must be false, because he discerns the character of absurdity in it by his moral sense.

He takes his idea of Christianity sometimes from the extravagances of the Methodists, sometimes from the tyrannical policy of the Papists, and perceives no inconsistency in making it either the delusion of silly enthusiasts, or the deep laid schemes of crafty deceivers to raise immense riches and power, according as serves his present purpose. He runs down charity, and cries up benevolence, but grossly mistakes both the one and the other: for he places charity solely in building churches or giving money to beggars, and benevolence in easiness of carriage and a chearful conversation, or in doing any obliging office for a friend, or acquaintance, that may be done without much trouble to yourself. He abhors persecution as an invasion of the rights of mankind, but he criticises and teases, derides and runs down with his contemptuous sneer whatever he does not like, the only means of persecution in his power: as if mankind had not a right to candid and equitable judgment with respect to their good name, as well as to their liberties and properties. He

laughs at Satan and the burning fiery furnace; and remarks very profoundly that anger is a passion, and God being dispassionate reason, cannot be angry nor displeased with anybody: but could do no more than give men the faculty of reason with a freedom of indifference which if they abuse by superstition and bigotry, they must inevitably run themselves into perpetual mischief, nor can the divine power help them, for it is not in the nature of things that they should be happy.

5. Thus have I attempted to sketch out the lengths both of bigotry and freethinking: if there be no real characters in life that take in the whole compass, I am heartily glad of it, and should be better pleased to stand convicted of having exaggerated matters, than found to have given a true picture of living originals. But I fear there are too many in the world who have made larger advances either way than they know of themselves: for neither bigot nor freethinker will ever own or is ever conscious of his being such, nor ever fails of distinguishing the other plainly. For we can easily see the budget upon our neighbours back, but nothing is harder than to penetrate our own secret motives of conduct and grounds of persuasion, desire having a more intimate connection with assent than is commonly

commonly imagined. There is a satisfaction attending the discernment of truth, which serves us for the mark to distinguish single truths, not immediately supported by others, and make us as it were feel them, whence comes the epithet Palpable applied to truth or falsehood: now there are other satisfactions springing from latent desires, that frequently beguile us by giving that pleasing countenance to whatever they fasten upon, which is the proper characteristic of truth clearly discerned. And perhaps there is a spice of either character, if not a mixture of both, greater or less, in the composition of every man: for we are all too closely wedded to our own notions, and too hasty to undervalue and cavil at those of others. Therefore we ought to have a fellow feeling for persons under either of the above-mentioned species of infirmity, and regard them only as a little further gone than ourselves in the common distemper incident to the human intellects.

Nor are they useless in the hand of Providence, but like other evils, made to produce good fruits by balancing one another, and serving to keep the world in the middle road of sobriety and discretion by their opposite attractions. Perhaps our clergy would grow remiss in their duties and quite careless of their flocks,

flocks, if it were not for the danger of having them all enticed away by the indefatigable inveiglements of enthusiasts. Perhaps they would be rigid and authoritative, placing Religion wholly in speculative points, and giving out their own ingenious imaginations for the certain sense of the sacred records, if there were not the freethinker ready at hand to demand a reason for all they assert, and catch them tripping whenever a moment off their guard. Nor is it unlikely that many of the laity have taken a distaste from the palpable absurdities of enthusiasts, against that injudicious sanctity that leads into them; or have been put upon finding reasons for the faith that is in them, and taught to stand a joke, by being pestered with the scoffers; or drawn by the disputes bandied about, to discourse of Religion, which else would have remained an unfashionable topic never to be mentioned in good company.

But it becomes not us to encourage or countenance evil that good may come of it; the permission of evil is the prerogative of Heaven, who alone knows how to produce good therefrom: it is our part to acquiesce contentedly under what we cannot help, to use our endeavours towards remedying or lessening the evil so far as we can, provided we do not apply persecution, animosity,

sity, contempt, or other remedies worse than the disease, but especially to be careful the infection does not take hold on ourselves. For prejudice surrounds us on all quarters, and in one shape or other creeps upon us imperceptibly, nor perhaps is it possible totally to escape its influence. There are prejudices of education, prejudices of company and custom, prejudices of private opinion, prior determination, inclination, habit, novelty, interest, convenience, and dislike. Nothing so easy as to avoid Scylla by running upon Charybdis, this deceives both the bigot and freethinker, for while they stand aghast with horror at the rocks upon which others have been beaten, are themselves swallowed up in the whirlpool: and in general men are apt to place the whole of prudence in guarding against some striking folly observed in their neighbours. Being therefore apprized of our danger, we may see there is need enough of vigilance and circumspection: and what makes our steerage the more difficult is, that we are forced to employ the same gales for carrying us on our way, that threaten us with destruction.

6. For without education, without deference to the authority and credit in the instructions of our tutors, we shall stick at the first entrance into knowledge: without regarding

regarding the opinions of others, we shall make no improvement beyond the pedantry of a college, without compliance with general customs, we shall attain no knowledge of the world, nor be of use to any other than ourselves, but must move each in a little sphere of his own, not as one of the society: without some steadiness in our own determinations, and adherence to the convictions of our reason, we shall be perpetually wavering, whiffle about with every wind, never know what discretion is, nor ever persevere in a regular course of conduct. Therefore we ought to give all these their proportionable weight upon us, not suffering any one to preponderate above the rest nor exceed its due share in our estimation: wherein lies the main difficulty, for whoever does not wilfully shut his eyes, may see they all deserve a proportion of our regard.

For we must suppose men to use their understanding in what they teach and what they do, or at least to have followed others before them who did use it: therefore whatever is received that way has the sanction of their judgment on its side; on the other hand, it will hardly be denied that whoever follows his leaders implicitly, or drives down with the torrent of custom, whether in matters of doctrine or practice, will inevitably run upon many

many pernicious errors and absurdities: whence comes the necessity of private judgment and using our own eyes. Nevertheless, the general reception carries a just and strong presumption in its favour, not to be overcome unless upon positive and cogent evidence, nor without mature deliberation: for there may be an expedience found by long experience in things where the contrary appears upon a slight inspection, and in all courts of judgment the burden of the proof lies upon him who tenders the issue. In like manner the decisions fixed in our mind whether by instruction, example or former exercises of our own reason, carry the like presumption, subject nevertheless to be outweighed by further examination or experience: and the adherence to them notwithstanding this counterweight, is termed either constancy or obstinacy, for both are the same quality of perseverance according as well or ill directed.

But in what particular cases this perseverance is a fault or a virtue, or when private judgment is to take place of authority or preconceived opinions, it may be impossible to lay down a rule for ascertaining precisely: nor were it expedient for the world that such rule could be found, for this would take away more than half the business of life.

life. We should then proceed mechanically in the beaten track, having no use for our understanding, unless now and then at stated seasons, when our rule called upon us to exert it: but now we must keep our minds alert, having employment for all our faculties, as well to observe and consider as to execute, and while we pursue our track, must look before and around us upon objects as they occur, using our best discretion to prevent us from either deviating wantonly, or scrupling to shift our quarter when occasion shall require. We must expect to make some mistakes, but may avoid such as are pernicious and destructive; and I know of no better rule for lessening them than to apply all our means of information, whether those received from others, or gotten by our own sagacity and industry, for balancing and correcting one another, and to beware constantly of the bias of passion; for this it is that always cramps the thought, and renders us narrow-minded.

7. We have already shewn the dangers of vanity and self-conceit, whether of being able to refine upon our teachers, or to lay open their utter ignorance: but these are not the only passions that destroy our freedom, they drive us forcibly into a licentiousness of thought, whereas others operate by restraint; but

but perfect freedom cannot be enjoyed without total exemption both from force and restraint. The shackles cast upon the mind may come from zeal for imbibed principles, scrupulous fear of doing wrong, shame of appearing singular, softness to receive impression from importunity and positive assertions, pliancy to custom, inveteracy of habit, indolence of temper, averse to the trouble of examination, hasty determination a natural consequence of the former, veneration or dislike of particular persons, interest, party, and private inclination. All which frequently prove grievous hinderances to the progress of our reasonings, and yet some of these restraints are necessary to balance one another, to keep us steady in a good course, or drive us out of a bad one, so that we may find it needful to call in their aid sometimes for our self-defence: like the garrison of a fortress, who, while the enemy scours the field, are forced to imprison themselves within their walls in order to secure their liberty. Well were it if we could always distinguish the friend from the enemy, that we might take to our fastnesses, whenever passion is abroad, but open our barriers to calm and sober reason.

But this is a science very hard to be learned, for passion so commonly marches under the colours

colours and in the uniform of reason, or makes her approaches so covertly by the sap and the mine, or by her magic glass of falsehood casts such shades upon her adversary, that we frequently mistake the one for the other. Therefore it is incumbent upon us diligently to study her manner and motions, to listen for the subterraneous thumps of the miner's spade and pickaxe, and carefully remark in what particular quarters she is most apt to assail us: for by use and practice we may become more and more aware of all her wiles, which must enlarge our range of freedom; because having learned to know when the coast is clear, we may sally out boldly to forage for new discoveries in the field of contemplation, without danger of an ambuscade.

But there is a particular fear that fetters the mind grievously when entering upon topics of Religion: some are so afraid of departing from the faith, that they will not depart from error or prejudice, whenever imposed upon them as an article of faith. This shuts out all means of information or amendment: with such a bar against them neither the Jew nor the Gentile could ever have been converted, the Papists reformed, nor the Enthusiast restored to his senses. We do not deny that the fear of the Lord

is

is the beginning of wisdom, but will never bring it to perfection: our reverence and awe ye ought never to lay aside, no not for a moment, for in him we live, and move, and have our being, on his power we depend both in body and soul, and in our obedience to his declared Will consists our happiness. But he requires not of us a slavish fear, for his service is perfect freedom in all senses, as well when we serve him with his talent of understanding, as with the active powers he has given us: nor shall we run less hazard of offending him by wrapping it up in a napkin, than by any involuntary mistakes it may lead us into.

8. This servile fear often dashes men upon the very rocks of offence they were apprehensive of: for it makes them think hardly of God as of a rigorous taskmaster; it represents him as giving arbitrary commands on supposition that such may magnify his authority: it pins them down to the letter without regarding the intention; attaches them to forms and ceremonies, not daring to penetrate into the substance: it draws them to imagine their help necessary to defend his glory and resist his enemies; it drives them into censoriousness, derision, animosity, and other kinds of persecution, under pain of forfeiting their allegiance, until the zeal of the

the Lord's house hath eaten them up: it overwhelms them with scruples, misgivings, terrors, and desperations, lays them open to credulity in dreams, omens, judgments, and supernatural events, debars them the use of their understanding as a presumption and profaneness, and leads them to flatter God with perfections not belonging to him.

This last may seem an inadmissible paradox; for what flattery can there be of a Being who is the sum and fountain of all perfection? But when we reflect how prone men of narrow views are to take their own errors and weaknesses for excellencies, it will appear not so strange that an over-timorous zeal for the divine glory, should ascribe such excellencies to him, which he has not: and this is a gross flattery, for which he will not think the better of them. It is this induces them to imagine him having his peculiar favourites, because friendship is a virtue in themselves, to distribute or withhold his mercies without other reason than his own good pleasure, because they esteem it a right to bestow their favours where they please without being asked a reason; this sets men against an universal Providence, lest they should contaminate his Purity and his Majesty, by allowing him any forethought of foul and trivial things; gives course to the doctrines

trine of a Freewill of indifference and absolute contingency of human action, lest he should be thought the author of sin; prevents all impartial examination into the proper idea of infinite goodness, that Attribute which of all others is perhaps the hardest and yet the most interesting for us to understand, for fear the little perplexities occasioned by the scantiness of our faculties should be taken for a mistrust of it, and has carried some divines so far as to prove, that God is good to those whom he damns eternally, because he preserves them in existence; never reflecting that Being without well-being is no kindness, and with perpetual torment is an intolerable burden, which according to our clearest ideas it would be a mercy to take off. But this sophism is needless, because we may satisfy ourselves without it: that God is good I both see and believe: that he is infinitely good I believe though I do not see it; for I am too conscious of the darkness of my understanding, to think myself warranted to reject every thing that I fail of seeing; therefore to persuade myself that I see it when I do not, because I fancy it will please, is no better than arrant flattery. For my part, the most pleasing thing to the Searcher of hearts seems to me to be a strict examination of my errors and ignorance, with a reliance

a reliance on his Providence for dispelling such of them as he judges proper: and if I have any other heresy I should wish to know it, as the most likely step to put me in the way of obtaining a cure.

9. But fear is the beginning of wisdom, therefore to be kept as a necessary guard upon the learner, until he has gotten a competent command of his imagination; for that roving faculty is apt to throw up wanton, fantastical, irreverent, mistrustful, desponding, gloomy, perplexing ideas, which have been catched by sympathy from the company of giddy, sanguine, or melancholy persons. These imaginations ought all to be banished instantly as soon as they offer to intrude, nor should he be less afraid of his own fears that start up at seasons from indigestion, disappointment, ill-humour, or bodily distemperature: a little observation will discover them by their changeable quality, ebbing and flowing by fits, and teach him to pay them no regard until he has had leisure to revise them in lucid intervals. The like caution will serve against very striking fancies that dart suddenly with the force of self-evident truths, but are often found hollow upon a second view, or a close and calm examination. The urgency of appetite too, the impetuosity of desire, the avocations of pleasure, are no otherwise

otherwise to be restrained, nor the lethargy of indolence roused, than by alarming him with terrors. But after these troublesome enemies are tolerably brought under, still to retain the same degree of terror would be bad policy: for then it becomes vicious, tending only to obstruct the operations of the understanding.

So that fear, like other medicines, is either salutary or pernicious according to the subjects whereto it is applied, and ought not to be given in extremes nor administered without good knowledge of the patient, and due consideration of the case. The bigot would fill every body with fears, though he has none himself, nor even caution, or proper reverence where most justly due. The free-thinker would banish all fear and caution, and reverence along with it, and would emancipate the world in the same manner as an apprentice is emancipated by running away from his master: but the only desirable emancipation is that attained by having served his time and learned his trade. Freedom of thought must be acknowledged an edged tool, necessary to the artificer as he cannot do his work cleverly without it, but extremely dangerous to be played with by the novice: it must be handled gingerly at first, or we shall run a hazard of cutting ourselves, or

other folks who have the misfortune to stand within our reach; nor must it ever be brandished about wantonly or heedlessly, for the oldest workmen have been known sometimes to do themselves a mischief. As there is a similitude in liberty of all kinds, we may gather some profitable instruction by observing wherein freedom of conversation and carriage consists: not in utter contempt of all rules and decency, but a thorough understanding and habitual expertness in them.

The well-bred gentleman behaves easily in all companies, is never at a loss how to deport himself, can speak his mind freely, and maintain his just rights upon occasion, yet without failing a whit of the respect or reverence due to any present; and can utter bold truths even to ladies without breach of good manners, or giving the least offence. Bring an unlicked cub into company, and you will find him shy and sheepish, never knowing when to sit or stand, uneasy in all situations; he dares not say his soul is his own, assents if you tell him black is white, and if a lord asks him what's o'clock, thinks it high treason to answer. Set him loose at once from his fears, and you may make him directly a free-thinker in behaviour, he talks loudly and pertly upon all subjects, contradicts and criticises, and jostles any body, puts the women

men to the blush with his smutty jokes and rude jeers, is positive and tenacious in trifles, and thinks himself as good as the best man in the kingdom. If he chance to have a volubility of pen, he entertains the public weekly with calumniating the great, if a slender ray of Parnassus, he cuts and slashes in satire, not against vices and follies, but against particular persons marked out by the populace for hunted deer, no matter for plan or moral, one or two of Horace's purple rags botched together with coarse seams of abuse will gain prodigious applause among the many: if a topping influence in a borough, he moves for presents of gold boxes, not so much to give pleasure to the persons receiving, as because he thinks it will vex some others: if a smattering in Philosophy, he runs off a treatise against miracles or prophecies, or manfully defends the natural rights of mankind, against attempts made upon them by the hierarchy some two or three centuries ago; if of divinity, he shows the clergy know nothing of their business, nor are half strict enough, but lays out certain methods of practice and articles of faith never heard of before, as indispensably necessary to salvation.

Thus we see in all cases how freedom proves a dangerous instrument in undisciplined hands,

that the management of it is a peculiar art not to be learned without careful application and experience, nor practised without cool circumspection and reserve; that apprehensions are not to be cast off at once, but suffered to subside by degrees in proportion as the scholar advances in proficiency, nor can ever be totally discarded without imminent danger of mischief.

10. Since then it appears so very difficult to run currently along the straight line of liberty without stepping aside into servility or licentiousness, it behoves us to seek for what dispositions of mind may guide the feet aright by keeping the eye steady upon its proper point. As precipitancy and passion, especially vanity, are the greatest misleaders, it is obvious that a reservation for second thoughts, a quiet coolness, a modesty and humility of temper, are the safest preservatives, nor can there be thorough freedom without them: for whenever a man undertakes to demonstrate his opponent in the wrong, or run him down with reproaches, you may pronounce him under an intemperance of mind that does not leave him perfect master of his thoughts.

From this rule of sobriety and humility spring several branches: first, a decent deference to authority without an implicit faith, and a candid construction of opinions however

ever singular: for one cannot suppose men embrace errors knowingly, but take them in a lump as appearing connected with something just and solid, or are led into particular errors by some specious resemblance of truth. Therefore candor will incline us to examine the several parts of a system, with a persuasion of finding something tenable in the bundle; and is never so well satisfied with its judgment of a mistake, as when it can discover the fallacy that might easily mislead a well-intentioned person thereinto.

Next, an unbiassed equity, unsolicitous to give triumph or vexation to any man, or set of men, having no favourites, or rather bearing an equal favour to all, agreeably to that saying of Tully we have often seen quoted, I am a friend to Plato, a friend to Socrates, but more a friend to truth; and ready to give every thing its due. This equitable temper will render the possessor averse to opposition and contradiction so far as can possibly be avoided, pleased with none other contention than that of brotherly love and good offices, labouring at reconcilement in part, if it cannot be effected entirely, studious to save the credit of an antagonist, careful to give no offence to the unwary, and aiming always at the general good. It prompts to regard the use and end of things, their tendencies as well

well as their intrinsic value; to distinguish between the form and the substance: to discern what is essential, and what only a barrier to protect the former, or an expedient to lead into it: endeavouring so to accommodate the road for the passage of different travellers, that they may proceed without interfering or jostling, as perceiving that the several tracts of it may terminate in the same journey's end.

Thirdly, a temperance of imagination not to be seduced by the charms of novelty, nor thrown off the hinges by any striking discovery or shining observation, regarding real use preferably to every other object, capable when necessity will permit of suppressing whatever might offend the weak, or scandalize the scrupulous, or be misunderstood so as to appear subversive of more important truths; herein practising that which the great master of eloquence, in his three dialogues upon that art, lays down for one of the first rules to be observed by an orator, That he be careful to let nothing drop which might do hurt to his cause.

Lastly, what in a former chapter we have called the science of ignorance or knowledge of what we cannot do, which will withhold the professor from driving at all lengths, whether with a probability of attaining them

or

or no, or entering upon topics where he can hope to add nothing to what was known by every body before; in example of the true poet, who, as described by Horace, examines the strength of his shoulders, what they are able to bear, and what they would sink under, and when meeting with a subject he despairs of ever bringing to a good polish, he prudently passes it over.

With these defences, which may be termed the Panoply of Liberty, I shall endeavour to arm myself against dangers, and though I cannot pretend to escape them all, but no doubt, shall be found sometimes to maintain an error, or pursue an argument that had better have been omitted; yet when it is considered what precautions I have taken, I shall hope to stand acquitted of ill design or heedlessness: as for involuntary slips, it is not in mortal man to avoid them, especially in such rugged and slippery paths as I shall be obliged to pass along. But since we have found vanity the most formidable enemy which yet is but an excrescence from the desire of commendation, that life and vigour of virtue and all manly performances: it seems expedient before I proceed onward, to bestow a Chapter upon it, in order to give it a thorough examination, that we may always know the excrescence from the genuine branches.

CHAP. IX.

VANITY.

But how shall we manage to pursue our examination effectually? where find the scales nice enough to weigh a bubble, or get a needle fine enough to pick up a vapour, that we may turn it about for our inspection on all sides, so as to discern exactly its make and colours. We can all see vanity at a distance with a striking plainness; it is like the clouds gathered in a body, whose tinselled edges glitter to the western Sun: but who can see the vapours drawn up by his meridian beams to form those clouds, though standing in the middle of the stream that flows copiously around him? So that other vapour, which surrounds us always like an atmosphere wherever we go, eludes our sight by its nearness. It lies too close to the eye to be discerned, too flat upon the skin to be taken hold of; it insinuates among our pores, mingles among our vital juices, trips along the tongue, dances upon the eyes, trepidates through the nerves, wantons in the gestures, lurks among the sentiments, taints the imagi-

nation,

nation, and runs throughout the whole constitution; insomuch that it has been generally thought innate, as an essential part of the human composition.

But though nature will not own the monstrous birth, it must be acknowledged one of the earliest of our acquisitions, which being bred in the bone will never go out of the flesh: for we suck it in with our milk, imbibe it from our parents, catch it from our play-fellows, are enticed into it by our self-love, encouraged to it by the world, and confirmed in it by the general practice: so that education, sympathy, and example all combining to rivet it in us, it is no wonder it grows into an inveterate habit, giving birth to most of our latent motives, operating upon us imperceptibly, and so perpetually entering the scale of judgment, as scarce to be distinguished from the other weights. For by its pervading quality infusing itself into them all, it can skulk under a thousand disguises, and Proteus like assume a thousand various forms, taking always the similitude of whatever covering it lies under. One never knows where to have it sure, if you mortify it in one shape it gathers new life in another, if you weed it effectually out of one spot, it instantly sprouts up in the opposite quarter behind you: so that with all the pains you can take,

your

your work is never ended, nor your vigilance allowed a moment's respite.

Vanity is given to children with their playthings, and taught them with their instructions: they are made to show about their little toys, to angle for every body's admiration at their prettiness, and bid to be mannerly by way of setting themselves above the dirty beggar boys in the street. In youth the fancy runs upon particular advantages possessed above others, whether bodily strength, sagacity in outwitting, handsomeness of person, or finery of dress, luxuriates in affection of all trifling kinds, and renders the school they were bred up in, the way of life they have been accustomed to, or little accomplishment they chance to have succeeded in, infinitely preferable to every thing else in the world besides. In manhood there are riches, or family, or favour of the great, or magnificence in buildings, or equipage and all the pride of life, administering fuel to vanity: the desire of excelling actuates all, and in the consciousness of it they place their prime delight: every one has something belonging to him better than his neighbours, and does something in a clevcrer manner than any body else; and to make his superiority the surer, despises every other accomplishment wherein he cannot shine eminently himself.

If

If the gifts of fortune are shown an insufficient ground for a man to value himself upon, he will assume a title from those of nature, from endowments of the mind, from learning, good breeding, or other proficiency: if driven out of this claim too, he may be vain of his virtues, or mistake his eagerness to out-strip for a zeal to make the greatest proficiency he can in them.

This passion operates where one would least expect it, sets up the mechanic for a judge over judges, qualifies the common councilman to dictate measures of state, serves for inspiration to the enthusiast, supports the methodist under his incessant labours, and reigns in triumph over the free-thinker. The wily sorceress contrives means to nestle in the bosom of Religion, works hollow passages under the solid ground of Philosophy, and finds a crevice to slip through into treatises on humility. Perhaps a tincture may have infused itself unperceived into this very page, under the specious appearance of relieving the Reader that he may return with fresh spirits to drier disquisitions; or the glittering sand of ornament been strewed, not so much to set off the subject, as by a secret impulse prompting to set off the operator.

2. But though I will not undertake to pronounce

nounce assuredly in all cases what is vanity and what is not, yet where one can perceive the water muddied by something wriggling under it, I shall try my best to catch hold on the slippery eel: that I may apply her to the microscope to examine her carefully, and discover the slender threads that are the spawn by which she multiplies. I am not unapprized that ambition of all kinds from that of the statesman down to the fidler, and Pride are distinguishable from vanity: the first being a greedines of acquiring superiority, the second a fond contemplation of that we have, and the last a like fond humour of showing it. But since unnecessary distinctions tend only to burden the mind, and I see no occasion for them here, I shall comprehend all three under the one term by which I have entitled this chapter; as they all spring from one common principle, the love of excelling others.

It may be remembered that satisfaction is the magnet directing every turn of our volition, the solid substance giving weight to all our motives; nature at our birth has annexed satisfaction to certain sensations, as of taste, or warmth, or rest, or little motions of the limbs, and at first we receive none other than what come by their conveyance. But very soon ideas of reflection make a lodgment

lodgment in the infant mind, beginning the stores of experience there, and form the faculty of imagination, by means of which the apprehension of absent pleasure becomes immediately pleasing: whence grow the appetites currently counted natural, and supposed to be born with us. But then those ideas only are pleasing in the apprehension whose archetypes were so in the sensation, for appetite prompts to nothing but what has afforded satisfaction when applied to the senses: which proves those ideas to have no intrinsic goodness in themselves, because deriving their attractive quality from the action of external objects.

As the little stock of experience encreases and imagination gets a larger field to play in, striking out new assemblages and trains not worked by the senses, there sprout up other appetites from that of pleasure: these are styled natural too, and with no great impropriety, because flourishing more or less in every soil universally, and appearing very early without any cultivation, they are the product of custom, our second nature. For I have endeavoured to shew in the chapters of my first volume upon the four classes of motives, how use grows from pleasure, and honour from use by translation: for being first found satisfactory as a means conducive

to

to their respective end, in process of time the end drops out of thought, and then satisfaction becomes compleatly translated to the means, resting upon it as an end without intervention of any other. Hence it appears that honour, however propagated among individuals by sympathy, derives, its origin and receives its value immediately from use, but remotely from pleasure; that nothing is laudable in itself, nor otherwise, than as conducive to happiness, which constitutes the real essence of rectitude, how much soever honour may be our proper mark whereby to discern it; and that commendation is there more justly due where it may be most usefully applied.

3. This appetite towards approbation, whether from other persons or from our own mind, does, like other appetites give an immediate pleasure in the gratification or the means tending thereto; and sometimes to the bare prospect of objects proper to gratify it, though lying out of our reach: as a basket of delicious fruits, though not beautiful to the eye may please the sight without our wanting to eat of them. Such pleasures are of the mental kind, not the sensitive, having no dependence upon the senses, but seated wholly in the reflection: unless you will call them internal sensations excited by the play of ideas

ideas in the reflexive faculty, whose operations in some cases are styled notices of the moral sense distinguishing between objects agreeable or disagreeable instantaneously, as the eye distinguishes colours.

This property of the moral sense misled the Stoics to place the essence of rectitude in the agreeableness discerned thereby: for they insisted that virtue was its own reward and good in itself, because the exercise of it is attended with a soothing complacence of mind, and because actions were acknowledged to be right, although manifestly tending to our own damage, or that of others: therefore the τὸ καλὸν or honestum or beauty of things discerned by the moral sense, constituted their whole goodness; and that nothing was good nor contributed a whit to happiness besides rectitude of sentiment and conduct. Whereas a little reflection may convince us, that rectitude is so far from being good in itself or the sole good, that it would have no goodness at all, nor even a being, if there were nothing else good, whereto it might conduce. Were it in my power to rescue a worthy family from some imminent danger or utter ruin, why should I think it right to do so, unless some benefit would accure to them therefrom? their incurring the mischief would be no fault in them, nor

their

their escaping a virtue, but a piece of good fortune: therefore if this escape were no good, nor contributed any thing to their happiness, it would be just as right for me to withhold, as to give any assistance. And the like may be said of every other act we perform, if it does not tend nearly or remotely to some enjoyment the reception whereof is no virtue, we might full as well, as rightly, and as commendably let it alone.

Well, but suppose I had bestirred myself to the utmost in warding off the mischief, though without the least success; still everybody would acknowledge I had done right and applauded me for my good intention, though of no avail to the parties: why so I hope they would, because I should do the same by them upon the like occasion; but let us consider upon what grounds I should judge this approbation due, namely, because a strenuous act of kindness indicates and strengthens a benevolent disposition of mind which may have better success another time, and helps to encourage it by example or sympathy in others who will have opportunities of becoming more serviceable thereby to their fellow-creatures. Thus commendation becomes due to right action, because useful in stimulating to future right actions of like beneficial tendency; and for this reason alone

alone, does not at all depend upon the present success, nor for any intrinsic goodness in the deed abstracted from its good effects.

Then for placing the value of virtue solely in the complacence accompanying the practice, this would make it a narrow, selfish principle; for then I am to do a good act, not for the good that may redound to anybody therefrom, nor even for my own future profit, but for my present amusement to please myself with the performance. Besides that complacence is to be found in other practices; the child can find it in his plays, the schoolboy in his exercises, the miser in his gainful schemes, and the villain in his cunning tricks: so that if present complacence made the goodness of things, there would be none other difference between virtue and trifle or rogurey, than that it happens to hit the fancy. Thus it appears in all lights, that the true value of rectitude does not lie in an inherent beauty striking the moral sense, but derives from a reference to something else that is not virtue. Nevertheless, our moral sense, generated by our own experience of things we have forgotten, or conveyed by instruction and sympathy from others upon an experience we never had, may prove an excellent guide, not safely to be neglected, for directing us into measures

having a tendency to happiness, too remote or too intricate for us to discern.

4. The pleasure arising from the three scenes of reflection before spoken of, seems to be the same in kind, differing no otherwise than in the objects affording it: for the state of mind and inward feel of the proud man, when reflecting on his excellencies, varies nothing from that of the voluptuary contemplating the exquisite dainties he is going to sit down to, or the covetous man when ruminating on the treasures he has gotten: each being none other than joy taken in the possession of something esteemed desirable. If I were to hazard a physical account of this matter, I should conjecture there was some little fibre of the mental organization, whose play had a quality of striking the joyous perception, or as we vulgarly say, tickling the fancy. Joy when occasioned by the constrast of very dissimilar objects, along which it proceeds by continual leaps and bounds from one to the other, becomes mirth: whence some have profoundly maintained, that laughter proceeds always from contempt, or a comparison of ourselves with something greatly our inferior; from which doctrine it would follow, as Addison observes, that instead of saying such a one is a very merry man, we ought to say he is a very proud man.

But

But there is another inference many times drawn in sober seriousness therefrom, namely, that ridicule is the touchstone of falsehood, because whatever excites our laughter must needs be contemptible and absurd: and if we object that the best of things have often been turned into jest, we are answered that whoever does this makes himself ridiculous, and not the things he jokes upon. I shall not repeat what I have urged in the chapter on the passions to shew, both that contempt does not always produce laughter, and that laughter flows from several other sources; I need only observe here, that the provocation to mirth, even where it does arise from contempt, is a very unsafe evidence to trust to: for it is well known, the prejudice of vanity will sometimes weigh down persons, and actions, and qualities in our estimation that were really far above our own, so as to make us triumph where he had more reason to be mortified: and witty burlesques of the noblest performances have, in the eyes of many people, carried off all the admiration belonging to them; or if this does not happen, one may laugh heartily at Virgil travestie, without either despising Cotton, or abating one's admiration of Virgil. The touchstone of ridicule was probably introduced into the present century by mistaking my Lord

Shaftesbury, whom I should understand to recommend ridicule, not so much as a means of making discoveries yourself, as of prevailing upon other people, and a surer method of eradicating popular delusions than persecution; agreeably with what Horace had laid down long before, That humour for the most part cuts short great disputes, more effectually and better than acrimony: yet both are an address to the passions not to the understanding.

If there be a particular fibre exciting joy in the mind, it never begins to play until put in motion by some of those exhibiting our other ideas of reflection; and may be brought gradually to connect with any of them upon successive alterations in our texture, made by their working in among one another until they come into contact with it: by which process I conceive translation effected, the pleasureable object drawing in the means of attaining it, until in time they touch the joy-exciting spring, and then, slipping from between the means, become immediately pleasurable in themselves. However this be, nobody can doubt that different objects give joy in the reflection to different persons, and are made to do so by education, example, custom, and other external causes: nor that they may successively change their quality in the same

same person, for he that was fond of pleasures may now become fond of gain, and afterwards prefer honour incomparably before both.

5. The sense of honour and calm but soothing joy, springing from self-approbation or the consciousness of rectitude in our proceedings, is perhaps the most useful and valuable acquisition of mind we can make: without a competent share of this appetite, our life would pass insipid, our conduct resemble that of brutes; we should not act as members of society though living in it, but could be kept in order only by dread of punishment, nor ever become qualified for liberty. It is this makes the greatest part of our enjoyment, for pleasures fall rarely in our way; and if we follow them closely, quickly satiate and become insipid, and use will not supply us with constant employment, for we cannot always find opportunities of pursuing our advantages; and when we do, though the view of benefit may put us upon the task, yet the reflection of acting right carries us through the several steps for compleating it: the tradesman and mechanic, driven into their professions for a livelihood, nevertheless are actuated therein as much by a regard to their credit and the commendableness of industry, as by thought of the profit they are making:

making: or if they want these motives, presently grow idle and neglect their business.

The enjoyment distilling from this source is sure and sincere, unmingled with dregs and unproductive of future inconvenience: for disappointment works no change in the colour of our actions, and involuntary mistake leaves no regret behind, but brings a healing salve, in the circumstance of its being involuntary, for the hurts it may lead into. Neither is it liable to be stopped by accidents, because depending wholly upon ourselves, not upon externals as pleasure and profit do; nor to be dried up by sickness or age, for the diseased and infirm still have something to do in bearing and easing their burdens, and even seasons of utter inability leave room for the comfortable retrospect of a former conduct. Therefore it is well worth our while to cultivate an habitual taste for this pleasure, which will never fail nor deceive us. The stoical doctrine was so far right, as that if a man could always have his judgment clear and his inclination strongly set upon following it invariably, he would always be happy.

This habit supplies the deficiency of our views, and conducts to many benefits we know nothing of: for had we always a clear insight into the whole result of our measures, and

and a lively present apprehension of the pleasures to be compassed by them, we should want nothing more either to direct us in the choice, or quicken our alacrity in the pursuit of them. Therefore I have hinted in a former place, that it is possible the perfect spirits of the invisible world may have no virtues belonging to them because needing none: for if their intelligence be so extensive as to reach all the minutest consequences of every action offering to their choice, and their judgment so just as that distant enjoyment weighs equally with the present, they will constantly pursue the road of happiness without any other motive to influence them. To call off their attention to any rule of rectitude would be, if not doing a disservice, at least superfluous: for they will always do what is right for the apparent benefit of it, without other mark to direct their choice, or spur of self-approbation to urge on their activity.

But this manner of procedure I conceive is not virtue, for I can agree once more with the Stoics in laying down, that virtue loses her essence unless embraced purely for her own sake upon account of her beauty, in apprehension of her being a good in herself without reference to pleasure or profit, or any other object beyond the very act of performance. Many things may be right

wherein

wherein she has no further concern than to see they are innocent, and not contrary to her interests: if a man leaves a shop, because he has found another where he can be supplied with better wares; if he relieves the honest necessitous poor in a borough, to serve his interest by the credit of it at an ensuing election, he certainly does right, but it is no virtue, because not done upon a motive of rectitude.

But how spacious a range of understanding soever there may be in the other world, we are certain it lies confined within a very narrow compass in this: we do not always know what will be wanted for our pleasures, so are forced to be taught a desire of profit, which urges to lay in a stock of useful things, without discerning what particular pleasures they will yield. And our uses often lie so remote, and require such a long train of various preparations to provide for them, that we very rarely know which way to turn ourselves, so as shall prove most advantageous to our interests. All that can be done is to form rules upon our own experience, or take them from the experience of others; and having gotten a full confidence in our rules, to follow them upon a general persuasion of their rectitude, without knowing or without seeing why they were right: or if they clash, to determine

determine the preference between them by an intuitive view of their respective beauty and rectitude; intuitive, not of their essence and nature, but of the records impressed in our mind, which may possibly have been falsified, yet are the only guide we have; whom if we neglect, we shall never work out other advantages than those lying from time to time just before our feet.

And where we do discern our distant pleasures and uses most plainly, yet the rust of indolence is apt to hinder the balance from turning with them, or some present desire magnified by the nearness of its object, to outweigh them; so that if there be any trouble or self-denial lying across the way, we cannot pursue them. For it has been found upon examination of human nature in the first volume, that present satisfaction is the motive which constantly influences us in all our actions; and that distant good never moves us unless there be an appetite urging towards it, whose present gratification, or uneasiness upon being thwarted, is strong enough to counterpoize ever other desire. So we must be bribed to work out future advantages by satisfaction continually given in hand during the pursuit of them.

Now the charms of rectitude and sweets of self-approbation, in proportion to the sensibility

sensibility we have of them will best supply this continual satisfaction; Profit and other inclinations may afford it copiously enough sometimes, but then they flow unequally by uncertain tides, only when opportunity serves, or the humour sets in strongly; and often stir up an activity worse than indolence, as leading into cruel disappointments, and grievous mischief. Whereas the satisfaction springing from a consciousness of well-doing, flows with an even, uninterrupted motion, checks the exorbitances and wanderings of other desires, and when rising in any competent degree, renders the conduct uniform, regular, prudent, profitable to the practiser, and beneficial wherever else there is room to be so.

Not but this stream has its tides too, nevertheless they do not depend upon the wind and weather of humour and accidental allurements, but upon the occasion requiring more vigorous efforts, upon the load of obstruction to be removed by them, and when rising high are capable of removing mountains. For experience testifies, that a sense of honour and the comforts of a good conscience have carried men through toils and labours, self-denials and dangers, supported them under misfortunes, afflictions, and distresses; enabled them to bear hunger and thirst,

thirst, pain and poverty, disappointment and injury, oppression and slavery: to sacrifice life itself with its most favourite advantages; and to perform wonders one could scarce have thought possible to human nature. This principle, though valuable in all, yet more especially deserves cultivation in persons of large abilities and high stations, to set them above private interest and vulgar passions, to make their talents extensively useful, nor can any great work, affecting the interests of multitudes, be achieved without it.

6. But there is a false honour, the object of a depraved appetite, almost as pernicious as the other is beneficial; I say almost, because like other evils it many times by chance brings forth excellent fruits, whereas the genuine never did hurt to the owner, and very rarely to any body else, nor unless misguided by unavoidable mistake. Now, in order to know them apart let us observe, that natural appetite in its perfect state prompts only to wholesome foods: but when depraved, hankers after such as are unwholsome and frothy, which hurt the constitution, or at least afford no nourishment. In like manner it has been found among our former enquiries, that honour grows from use, as that does from pleasure, and is there most deservedly belonging where it may be most usefully applied. But

it

it cannot be usefully applied unless the object whereon it fixes be useful, that is, productive of happiness: with this only difference between the natural and moral appetites, that the former excite to our own sustenance alone, whereas the latter extend to things that promote happiness any where. And the reason of the difference is obvious, because the victuals eaten by another can contribute nothing towards nourishing me, but the Attribute of Equity insures me a proportionable share in all the enjoyment I can procure for another.

Yet though the object be useful, the appetite may not always be so; if immoderate, or needless, or ill-timed, so as to spend itself in idle reflections when it ought to be spurring on to action: in all these cases whether of being turned upon wrong objects, or wrongfully applied, it degenerates into vanity. For if honour prompt to things mischievous or trifling, to revenge, to contention, to pulling down a rival, to contempt of application and industry, or to finery, to fantastic airs, to skill in diverting tricks or harmless plays, it is misplaced; if it so engross the man as that he cannot stoop to common business, nor do any thing unless for the sake of shining, it is immoderate; if upon having usefully spurred on the learner to acquire

valuable

valuable accomplishments, it still continues to stimulate after they are become habitual and easy, and he can go on currently without a spur, it is needless; and if it amuse him with the retrospect of what has been bravely done, while there is work lying at hand that wants further dispatch, it is ill-timed and unseasonable: in all which instances it is the working of a vitiated and depraved habit.

7. There is scarce any thing harder in the whole science of human nature and morality than to settle the proper point of honour, or to draw the exact line separating the true from the false. I find the difficulty rise upon me the further I enter into my subject, for while we kept in generals it was easy to see that honour is there most deservedly placed, where it will be most useful; and that a just sentiment of it will incline the possessor always to pursue what is right in preference to present pleasure or ease, or profit, or allurement of any passion whatever; but when we come to particularize the points whereto this sentiment ought to direct, it seems as impossible a task, as that mentioned in the fable of making a suit of cloaths to fit the moon, who changes her shape every night. For honour being a reference to use must necessarily correspond with the variations found in that; but

but the professions and stations of men are so various, that whatever course of conduct you fix upon as most laudable for one, will be found of little avail for the next.

The soldier places his point of honour in fidelity and contempt of danger, and he does right, because these qualities render him serviceable in his profession: the merchant has no personal dangers to encounter, nor command of his prince to execute, so he may be cowardly and grumble at public measures without much inconvenience, but he values himself upon punctuality in his payments, and acquitting himself skilfully of his commissions; the common labourer has no payments to make nor correspondents to satisfy, so it is best that he should value himself upon doing the work well he is hired to, without loitering or purloining any thing. Perhaps there are none utterly destitute of a sentiment of honour, which if so misplaced as to prove detrimental to them, may yet have been highly beneficial to persons in a different situation from whom they copied it. So I shall not undertakes to canvass this delicate subject compleatly, as being past my skill, but only to gather such observations and explanations occurring to me, as may help to give us a little insight into the nature of it, yet without confidence of their being always exactly just:

just: and to form some rules for determining our judgment, which nevertheless admit of large exceptions, according to the particular cases whereto they may be applied.

8. Honour first rises out of use in our early childhood, by means of that advantage found in the help and encouragement given by persons about us according to our behaviour, until having run frequently in that track it becomes translated to the behaviour itself; so that children can applaud or take shame to themselves in secret for things they do not apprehend will ever be known: and thus I conceive the appetite giving self-complacence or compunction generated. As they grow up, they cannot long fail of observing that riches, title, rank, magnificence, bodily advantages, natural talents of the mind, and improvements made from either, are esteemed subjects of admiration and applause: whence by the like progress as before, they learn a self-approbation in whatever of these they possess, and in any advances made towards them. In process of time they find, or are tol[d] they have luck to fall under good gu[ides] that the possession of these things [is] most part wholly and always p[ro]to fortune, upon whom their sel[f] has no effect to make it b[e] which therefore deservedly

their own actions, and the sentiments of mind that may influence them aright in the application of such powers and opportunities as fall to their lot.

By further observation or instruction they learn that applause is sometimes diversly and contrarily bestowed, that the objects of common admiration have not always that efficacy to ensure happiness as imagined, and that the pursuit of them often leads into inconveniences greater than their value when attained. This puts them upon judging for themselves upon the value of things independently on the general estimation: but finding that passion or secret propensities are apt to warp the judgment, or prevent its influence upon the conduct when clearest, they must perceive that an unbiassed judgment, and a ready disposition to act in pursuance of it, are the best acquisitions they can make: because in proportion as they can attain these, all other good things attainable will follow of course. Thus the seat of true [illegible]our lies wholly in our own sentiments and [illegible] and the fruits of it are that self-ap- [illegible] and complacence of mind arising [illegible]onsciousness of having judged im- [illegible]n the best lights the occasion [illegible]nd conducted ourselves ac- [illegible] failure or deviation. The judgment

judgment may err, but this makes no alteration in the state of mind: passion and prejudice will often slip in unawares to mislead us, but can never do it so privately, as to escape the consciousness of something passing amiss, which then changes the complacence into compunction.

But when I place the essence of the Honestum, or laudable, solely in the rectitude of our sentiments or measures, as the proper ground of self-approbation, without regard to the success, or to externals, or other people's estimation, I must subjoin a caution or two, to prevent my being misapprehended as giving in to the stoical extravagancies. First, let us call to mind that there are other complacencies besides that of self-approbation: if a man be hungry on a journey and find a commodious inn, he feels a complacence in the sight of it: so he does in the preparations making by the people of the house for his dinner, in possession of the victuals when brought upon the table, in carving and eating them: but here is no self-applause in all this. Or if he were in pursuit of some particular preferment, and is told the minister in whose disposal it lies, has received a very advantageous character of him, I suppose he will find the news very complacent to his hearing: and so it may well be,

without making him think the higher of his merits for what his friend has said, or his patron believed of them. In like manner there is a complacence in the possession of estate, rank, credit, reputation, sagacity, learning, and the advances making towards them; and this complacence is no blemish in the character, for happiness is the proper business of life, and every innocent pleasure or gratification of desire is so much accession to happiness: yet are they no subjects of self-applause, nor need a man value himself upon being happy or having the means of enjoyment in his power; for the complacence of self-approbation is a distinct species from that arising from pleasure or profit, and if engrafted upon them, will degenerate into arrant vanity. So a man may justifiably rejoice in externals, or whatever is the subject of general estimation, and pursue them, so he does it consistently with the rules of prudence and moderation, as things pleasurable or useful, not as laudable.

The next caution I would thrown in is, that by drawing our complacence solely from our own judgment and adherence thereto, I be not understood to require an utter contempt of the practices and opinions of the world, for this would rather encourage vanity than avoid it; the observation of what others think

think and do, is one necessary means of informing our own judgment, and, in matters of form and ceremony, that is commonly right which is most generally received: the judgment of others may justly give a sanction to our own, or even direct it where we have no better lights, yet still it ought to operate by way of conviction or information, not of impulse, like a torrent driving us before it. He that has not constancy to withstand the stream of custom when his clear judgment directs the contrary way, or has not compliance enough to give up any fond humour of his own for the general convenience; will never persevere steadily in a laudable course, bending with the solid banks, but forcing the crowded reeds to bend under it. What are the exact measures both of constancy and compliance lies beyond my skill to ascertain, and perhaps any body's else: it is enough to give warning that there are extremes on both sides; let every man use his best care and discretion to avoid them.

Nor yet would I prefer what is specious in theory to what is feasible in practice, or insist upon a greater refinement of rectitude than the parties to whom it is recommended can bear. Mankind must be treated in a manner suitable to their respective consti-

tutions of mind: if you could entirely take off their admiration from the objects which ordinarily excite it, you would hardly succeed in placing it upon better; so you would only deprive them of those incitements which stimulate them to industry in their professions, and that veneration for high station which helps not a little to keep them in order: therefore no more can be discreetly attempted, than to bring the mind gently by practicable degrees to look inwards, and seek for complacence in her own motions, turning it off from externals in proportion as it can be found in these. Neither would I be so rigid as absolutely to condemn all self-valuation upon the gifts of nature, or fortune, or the improvements made upon either; for custom, sympathy, and the daily language of all we meet with, draws so continually this way, that it may be impossible wholly to avoid it: but then this spice of vanity, though excusable from natural infirmity, is not commendable, but ought to be carefully watched over, to receive no willing encouragement at any time, and be diminished as fast as possible by taking all occasions of inuring ourselves to examine the rectitude of our proceedings. For rectitude is not so destitute of charms, but that she would captivate many more hearts if she were

were more attentively looked upon: and men would much oftener act rightly, if they would take the trouble of reflecting oftener whether they do right or wrong.

9. Vanity in all species of it consists in a comparison of ourselves either with particular persons or the common run of mankind, or sometimes with other creatures and even inanimate Beings: for when the humour takes we can value ourselves upon the privileges of human nature, assuming the title of imperial man, Lord of the creation; and is stirred up by the sight of any thing superior or inferior to what we have ourselves, prompting to emulate the one or despise the other. But the true sense of honour respects only the laudableness of the deed, without reference to what is done better or worse by another: for his acting rightly takes nothing from our rectitude, nor can his failing excuse our own. Therefore the virtuous man is never better pleased than when he sees examples of virtue around him, for his benevolence makes him rejoice to find so many participate in that which he esteems the most plentiful source of happiness: on the other hand, the vain man rests supremely satisfied while shining among his inferiors, but if a competitor arises to eclipse him, he is instantly mortified. The terms Excellent,

Noble,

Noble, Exalted, Transcendent, Incomparable and the like, usually employed in discoursing on things laudable, may make it imagined, that all honour subsists by comparison, if we do not reflect that complacence of every kind may spring from contemplation of a single object, without prospect of any other to compare with it.

A man with a good appetite may rejoice in his victuals without thinking how much better they are than bread and cheese, or take pleasure in receiving the present of a bank note without staying to compute how many times it is more valuable than a shilling, or delight in the conveniencies of a house that he has taken, though he does not reflect how much he should miss them if obliged to remove into the next cobler's stall: so the consciousness of having acted right in any instance, may yield its full complacence to him that has a taste for pleasures of this kind, though he never thinks of what would have happened if he had acted wrong. I know very well that comparison often enhances our pleasures, and as there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance, so the sinner himself may feel an additional joy in contemplation of the wretchedness from which he has obtained

tained deliverance: and I acknowledge that the complacence in well-doing will be greater in proportion to the pains, the dangers, the difficulties, the temptations a man has surmounted in performing it. But the latter case is not a comparison, any more than the music of a concert, because exceeding that of a single flagelet; and in the former it does not constitute the essence of the pleasure found in self-approbation, it only makes an accession from another fund, for what I did right to day is equally so, whether I did right or wrong yesterday.

But wherever the complacence of an action arises wholly from the contrast, and would be lost if a different object were set together in prospect, it is certainly a spice of vanity: nor can justly be called a self-approbation, because resting upon two bases, the performance of another person equally with our own. Yet it may be said that rectitude directs to the more excellent performances in preference to the less, which nevertheless might have been commendable if the others had not come into competition; a man may rest satisfied in the prudent management of his own affairs while he has nothing better to do, but if some public service interferes which cannot go on without his helping hand, it would become wrong and

and blameable to keep still immersed among his private concerns: so that comparison seems here to determine the essence of laudableness.

But when we consider the matter attentively, we shall find the less excellent loses nothing of its value upon opportunity offered of the greater, but because we cannot do both, the omission of the former outweighs in the scale of rectitude, and the latter is not a whit the more laudable for the other being in our power. The case is the same in matters of profit; where a man may pick up a guinea or a shilling but cannot get both, I suppose he will take the gold: not that the shilling is worth a farthing the less, or the guinea the more for lying by one another, but because by taking up one he must miss of the other. Whereas the noblest action weighs nothing in the scale of vanity, unless the multitude or some particular person be supposed incapable of equalling it. Besides that rectitude has nothing to do with comparison, unless where there is a choice of different actions, and then it compares between things and not persons; judging of the excellence upon what the performer himself might have done, not upon what any body else can do better or worse than him: which makes another remarkable difference between it and vanity.

But

But is not the sense of honour, when in its most perfect state roused by the sight of excellence in others? does it not powerfully stimulate to the imitation of noble examples? will it not raise an ardent desire and eager wish to copy the brightest patterns of virtue, even when it has no hopes of ever being able to equal them? All this I can very readily allow, and the more readily because I look upon it as the surest sign of the appetite being genuine and vigorous: but this does not amount to a comparison of persons, as we may perceive by examining the similar motions of other desires. An empty stomach may lie quiet without giving disturbance while there is nothing in prospect to set it a craving, but the sight of company sitting down before a plentiful meal will presently make the mouth water to be doing the like; the more heartily they feed, the better they seem to enjoy their repast, the greater will be the longing: yet the desire here fixes solely upon their victuals, nor has any thing to do with the persons; for if the hungry spectator be admitted to sit down among them, and find enough for all, he will not care how many others partake with him, nor how fully they share in the enjoyment If a traveller on foot almost wearied down be overtaken by a carriage, I suppose he may wish to have a lift,

a lift, and if he can obtain one, will rejoice in his easy situation! how many people soever there be in the vehicle, it makes his seat never the worse, provided there be good room for him; nor the better that he passes by hundreds of travellers still on foot: and if he have any thought of superiority over them, this is no gratification of the natural appetite for ease, which makes riding pleasant, but an impulse of vanity.

So when a laudable example stirs up an impatience to do the like, or makes a man ashamed of himself for falling short of it, if his appetite be set right, it is the thing done, not the party doing, with which he draws the comparison: for if he can once upon trial succeed in the performance, he has his desire, no matter how many others make the trial too, nor how they acquit themselves; their succeeding throws no obstacle against his success, nor does their disappointment promote it.

10. Therefore the desire of excelling is not the same with the desire of excellence; the distinction between them is pretty nice and commonly overlooked, but there is a just and real one, and very material to be well studied, because by this touchstone we may try the genuineness of our moral sense. Men are forward enough to aspire at things great and

and noble; but then it is generally, whether they know it or no, only to give them an eminence and superiority above others, which is as well answered by the depressure of every thing else above them, as by their own advancement: and have so little value for the heights they aspire to, that they could be fully contented to stand where they are, provided they could be assured that nobody else would ever come up to them.

But he that desires excellence can take nothing in compensation for the want of it; to see others deprived of it affords him no gratification, nor will his complacence in the attainment be abated by their partaking with him: for he regards the intrinsic value of the possession, without looking onward to other objects from whence it may draw a value by comparison. The soldier may find a complete satisfaction in the consciousness of having done his duty in the times of danger, the magistrate in the uprightness of his judgments, the physician in his cares for the diseased, the tradesman in his honest industry, every private man in the sincerity of his dealings, although he should believe there are thousands beside who have the same fund of complacence. But when once he begins to say with himself, Nobody is so careful of his conduct as I, or to make an amusement of pitying the thoughtless multitude around,

he

he is drawing within the magic circle of vanity: for genuine pity always carries a degree of uneasiness, therefore whenever we feel a joy in the exercise of it, we may be sure it is spurious and hypocritical.

Not that I mean to condemn all observation of other people's conduct, nor compare them together or with ourselves, in order to excite our abhorrence of what is bad and whet our appetite for what is good, for we may profit more this way than by confining our thoughts solely to our own speculations, upon the same grounds that make example more prevalent than precept, because what we see before our eyes strikes a stronger idea upon the imagination, than any we can raise by ourselves: but when we have once gotten our full idea we have done with the archetype, the benefit accruing therefrom being by information for our future conduct, not by encrease of complacence in our present, all further contemplation might prove dangerous, as drawing us from following the impression so received.

Nevertheless, it must be owned that in many cases, to excel is the necessary point to be driven at; where there are several competitors for the same thing, some one must prevail by his comparative not his absolute merit; no matter how little he have,

provided

provided all the rest have none, nor how much, while there is another still more deserving: and this happens so frequently, for scarce a day passes but we are struggling for some prize, important or trifling, which cannot be had by all, that it leads us insensibly into a habit of placing our honour upon superiority, and perhaps is the principal cause of that universal depravity of taste. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to guard against this evil custom with all our vigilance? if we can succeed in bringing our appetite to fasten upon what we do ourselves without reference to what is done elsewhere, we shall lose nothing by the change not excepting that superiority the world is so fond of, for whatever of it can be attained, we shall attain by constantly doing our best. Even in common conversation I would have a man endeavour to shine, but why need he strive to outshine? let him shine as bright as he can, and if outshining be in his power it will follow of course without his seeking, if not in his power he will but fret and vex himself by striving for it.

When competition becomes unavoidable by our being one among many striving for the same thing which all cannot attain, the desire of surpassing the rest ranks in class among the motives of use, not those of honour;

nour: the indulgence of it is justifiable not laudable, nor need we value ourselves there upon any more than upon striking an advantageous bargain. But occasions of this sort happen so often, that the frequency of them transfers satisfaction from the advantage gained by surpassing to the surpassing itself, and thence forward we pursue it as an ultimate object of desire. To avoid which translation it will be prudent as much as we can, to keep the particular advantage in view, so as to remain indifferent to the thoughts of surpassing, unless when necessary to attain some other allowable purpose; for so long as the end continues in prospect, translation to the means can never take effect.

11. I have said before that the sense of honour has its tides, which ought to be regulated by the occasion according to the force requisite for surmounting obstacles that chance to lie in our course. When some new, praise-worthy habit is to be acquired, it behoves us to use all our skill and industry for raising a strong desire, that may carry us through the difficulties of the first entrance: but after being grown familiar and easy, whatever goes beyond that gently-soothing content, distilling from the consciousness of rectitude in the most common actions, is needless, unseasonable, and therefore a waste:

for

for our spirits cannot keep up an ardent glow unless now and then for a little while, and if we spend them unnecessarily, we shall want them for more important occasions. People for the most part value themselves upon what they have acquired until they sink into indolence by losing all desire of making further attainments: here their estimation is misplaced and consequently vicious.

When this passion rises to an immoderate degree, so as to hang continually upon the thoughts, it becomes pride, and proves an effectual bar against all subsequent improvement, not so much from laziness as self-sufficiency: for the proud man so wraps himself up in his excellencies as to think he is all perfection already, or at least incomparably superior to the rest of mankind, which renders it superfluous for him to do any thing even for the sake of surpassing. But if we recollect what has been shewn in the proper place, that honour is there more deservedly placed where it may prove most useful, we shall see that it belongs primarily to nothing else than the right management of our powers and present opportunities, because there alone it can take effect: and secondarily to acquisitions, whether in possession or prospect, as it may spur on our industry to improve, or attain them. For a man cannot

encrease

encrease his wealth, his dignities, his health, nor the merit of his past performances, merely by the admiration of them: but if he have a strong appetite for self-approbation in the employment of every present moment, this will urge him vigorously to employ them as may afford such gratification.

It will be asked, perhaps, whether the value of rectitude does not lie partly in the pleasure of a retrospect upon good conduct past; and whether such pleasure may not be laudably indulged. I readily admit this as one very valuable reward of virtue, and may be innocently received when offering of its own accord: but I see nothing laudable in the indulgence, as that term implies a studious hunting for it, and striving to make it dwell upon the reflection. Where this is done I apprehend it happens from the too common mistaken fondness for intense pleasures, which we have made appear in the Chapter upon that article, make nothing near so large an addition to the sum of our happiness, as those of the gentler kind: for our mental organs as well as our bodily muscles can bear only a certain degree of play; if put upon violent or continual exercise, they lose their tone, nor can give their first relish, but their motion becomes insipid and cloying. Therefore the proud and the vain man lie

under

under the same error, though less innocent, with the boy who wished to ride all day long upon a gate; they find a vast entertainment in contemplation of their excellencies when newly discovered, so conclude they shall be supremely happy by keeping them in view without intermission: but the gust of novelty quickly flies off, and though they continue the exercise from inveteracy of habit because they cannot help it, they find no more joy in it but continual mortification by the spiteful world refusing them justice.

Therefore true honour and true policy, which constantly unite, point always inwards upon the action now in our power: or if at any time they draw the eye to distant and external objects, it is only in order to direct or invigorate our endeavours in this. Such refined sentiment with a total indifference to all other allurements is indeed a height of perfection too far above the reach of mortal man, to be enjoined as a duty: it is the white spot in the middle of the target which nobody must ever expect to hit, yet by repeated efforts we may come a little and a little nearer. And there is abundant encouragement for us to use them, for in proportion as we grow more habitually expert at hitting the mark of rectitude in all cases, not only of virtue and duty but likewise of common prudence and

propriety, we shall compass all other attainable ends without aiming at them; but for the unattainable, they were better let alone, because nothing besides labour lost and vexation of spirit could ensue upon our trying for them: a spontaneous complacence would accompany every thing we do, with so much transport occasionally as our organs can bear, so much pleasing retrospect as our eyes can behold without straining, and so much general approbation too as is needful or fit for us to receive.

12. Having now endeavoured to settle the essence of true honour, which regards solely our own conduct, together with such other objects as may serve to rectify it I might pronounce every self-approbation springing from a comparison of ourselves with other persons, or of things with respect to the persons possessing them, as falling under the denomination of vanity. But this I fear would be thought too severe and rigorous, unless I may be allowed to distinguish an excusable species of vanity, which is so much as arises unavoidably from the infirmity of human nature. For we are so perpetually drawn into the train of making comparisons by the example of all around us, by the general language and manner of expressing estimation, something of this turn appearing in the motions,

tions, the gestures, the tone of voice, the looks, and frequently the dress of every company we fall into, as renders it impossible to escape the infection. Whatever then we catch involuntarily this way may be ranked under the class of indifference lying between laudable and blameable.

But this species is ascertained by the degree, whatever passes the line of innocent moderation may be declared vicious; the difficulty lies in drawing the exact line, and determining what shall be deemed an extreme: we stand open here to the like attack as was made of old by the Academics and Sceptics against the judgment of the senses, with their sophism of the Sorites, or argument of the Heap; because, say they, if you drop a number of things upon one another you can never tell precisely when they begin to make a heap. But if I cannot tell the precise number of bees requisite to make a heap or a swarm, so that if a single bee flies off, the remainder will not be one, yet if I see a cluster of them as big as a pomkin, surely I may pronounce that a swarm, without danger of mistake. Therefore I shall not undertake to set out the exact limits of vicious vanity, but leave it to every one's own judgment to discern what lies manifestly within them; if he be tolerably observant, he will

find more of whose denomination he cannot doubt than perhaps he can eradicate; to attempt to direct him might be only misleading him, since the same thing may be vanity in one person or one situation which is not so in another; as the same meal may be too much for a prisoner, which would scarce suffice him when enjoying the air and exercise of a journey. Therefore I need only try to point out the mischiefs naturally attendant upon vanity, in order the better to engage his observance in discovering, and diligence in guarding against it.

13. I have already remarked that it engrosses the attention from other objects whereon it might have been much better employed: for the proud man is so taken up in contemplating, the vain man in displaying, and the ambitious man in encreasing his superiority, as leaves him no room to think of any thing else not relative thereto: so he has not half the use of his judgment or powers, but slips his opportunities where the improving them would have redounded greatly to his advantage. But besides this, it proves a perpetual fund of contention, producing it even out of trifles; for it being impossible that more than one should gain the superiority, wherever this is the aim there must necessarily be an opposition; so the proud

proud looks upon everybody as an adversary; if they shew a disposition to excel in anything, it is an attempt to eclipse his lustre; if they mind their own business quietly, there is a hazard that by the prudent management of it, they may come up nearer to his pitch than he wishes. And the mischief sometimes spreads to multitudes not originally concerned in the quarrel: for the world must be thrown into confusion, because Pompey could not bear an equal, nor Cæsar a superior.

From the spirit of contention naturally proceed censoriousness, calumny, jealousy, and envy; these evil weeds may spring from other causes, as a competition of interest; but then for the most part they are only particular and occasional, whereas vanity renders them more general and habitual, having a suspicion of every thing that may hurt it." The vain man, as such, must necessarily be selfish, as having a separate interest inconsistent with that of all other people, who it may be presumed would willingly do something for their own advancement; so he looks upon them as his rivals throwing obstructions in the way of his desire to excel: he cannot afford them the least spark of hearty esteem, because that would raise them a little nearer

to

to his own level: he dares not do them real services nor sincerely wish them well, because he would conceit himself the only happy and deserving person alive: or if at any time he does a kindness, it is only for the vanity of shewing his power, or raising a dependence.

Nor is his temper of mind more injurious to others than troublesome and dangerous to himself, laying him open to flattery and imposition: if you can find means to tickle his vanity you may do anything with him, serve any end upon him; he loves you prodigiously, but as he loves his horse, without any degree of esteem or benevolence, merely for being instrumental to his pleasures: he is discontented and fretful at not receiving his due from the world; if falling into any trouble or affliction, gloomy, desponding, and querulous, as not deserving such treatment from Providence. He would meet with continual mortification, for considering how many various qualifications there are among mankind, he could very rarely be the topmost of the company in all points, but that he has a trick to elude these accidents: for he persuades himself that whatever he happens to be expert in, is the only valuable accomplishment, all others being not worth having; by this artifice, if there be

twenty

twenty people together, each may be the only happy soul in the circle bearing away the bell from all the rest.

14. But this little temporary pleasure of an imagined superiority, the flattering bait of pride to get her swallowed down into the entrails until she takes habitual hold on the heart, is greatly overbalanced by many solid mischiefs: for nothing operates more powerfully in perverting the judgment, that guiding faculty by whose ministry alone we may render all the others serviceable. The vain man can never think justly of things nor equitably of persons, where his vanity has any the least concern, which it seldom fails to have in most cases occurring for his decision. It throws a bar against improvement by the persuasion of a sufficiency already attained: it shuts his ear against information and his heart against conviction, lest he should appear ever to have been wanting in knowledge, or liable to mistake. It prevents all self-examination, for fear he should find something that might wound his vanity: it renders him indocible of that most useful science of ignorance: for he knows of none within him to be the object of such science. It falsifies the weights and measures of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, laudable and blameable, making him judge of them according to what he has

or

or does, or believes himself exaggerating his own and depreciating whatever belongs to another. It damps his industry by the disdain of little acquisitions as unworthy his notice, whereas it has been often observed, that a shopkeeper will never thrive who despises small profits: in like manner we feeble, short-sighted mortals, who at best are but pedlars in the trade of virtue, shall make no great progress at all if we neglect opportunities of gaining a little ground at a time. But the conceited will stoop to nothing that is not grand, noble, extraordinary, he must perside at the helm: or convert heathen nations, or draw multitudes at his heels, or knock down all opposers with demonstration: and if by scorning to do anything common he undertakes nothing feasible, he solaces himself with reflecting what mighty wonders he should have performed if such or such perverse incident had not fallen in the way.

Vanity taints religion itself and contracts the pale of salvation, usurps the power of the keys to shut, though very rarely to open: for it will not suffer the patient to bear the thought of sharing the favours of heaven in common with others, nor to admit a total dependance even upon the Almighty; but he must claim something as entirely his own which God did not give him, and this something

thing he can find nowhere else, at least in so eminent a degree as in himself. He sees nothing of that chearful prospect of nature which I have shewn, in the Chapters on Benevolence and Equality, stands conspicuous to a benevolent eye: for one can be just to the advantages and enjoyments of all where one wishes well to all, but he wishes well to nobody, for fear it might endanger his supereminence. His delight, such as it is, lies in finding fault, in undervaluing, in blackening, in hypocritical commisserations; so being conversant only with objects turning the worst sides, he sees every thing wretched and despicable around him; and in melancholy moods, which will come upon us all sometimes through indisposition of bodily humours, or cross accidents, or want of engaging employment, has nothing to comfort himself, but laments a defect of goodness in the Disposer of all things, for he has no notion of goodness that does not single him out for his object.

If examples are not to be found of all these mischiefs produced in their full extent by vanity, it may be ascribed to that little mixture of good principle which has place in the most faulty characters, or to other passions counteracting it, or to the awe of the world keeping it a little within bounds: for vanity, how

how much soever cherished by the owner, appears always odious to others, who look upon it as an attempt to encroach upon their right to reputation; so defeats its own purpose, and by exacting more than due, discourages the payment of what is due: for you cannot praise a proud man without giving him an occasion of triumphing in his superiority over you, and thereby becoming accessary to your own disgrace. Therefore he strives to conceal his pride, nor dares even think within himself that he has it, by which concealment he checks the growth of it a little, as the growth of weeds is checked by being covered from sun and air: so that perhaps there is not a thorough proud man upon earth, so compleatly such as may be conceived in theory; and if there be such a Being existent, it can be none other than the Devil. Yet whoever will reflect seriously upon what has been suggested, can scarce fail of seeing the natural tendency of pride to produce all those pernicious consequences above specified, and that they must necessarily abound more or less in proportion to the degree and inveteracy of the habit: which by reason of the continual forced concealment, just now spoken of, works more slily than any other into the sentiments and actions, and operates unperceived

ceived by the party himself. Wherefore we cannot be too vigilant over the wily serpent, nor too industrious to bruise its head whenever popping out, that it may have the less vigour to wriggle among our vitals, and spread its venom about in our constitution.

15. Nevertheless it will probably be asked, would I then extinguish every spark of vanity in the world? every thirst of fame, of splendor, of magnificence, of show? every desire of excelling or distinguishing one's self above the common herd? What must become of the public services, of sciences, arts, commerce, manufactures? the business of life must stagnate. Nobody would spend his youth in fatigues and dangers to qualify himself for a General or an Admiral. Nobody would study, and toil, and struggle, and roar out liberty to be a Minister. Perhaps in the next century, when the present set of generous patriots shall be extinct, the boroughs must pay their members wages again to serve for them. The merchant would not drudge on through the infirmities of age in filling his country with foreign commodities. The artificer, having gotten a competence sufficient to serve his pleasures, would leave the art to be practised by novices and bunglers. The man of learning would not spend his spirits early and late to enrich

the public with knowledge, to combat error, or defend his favourite truths against all opposers. Perhaps this great city might become depopulate, we should saunter about among the cattle, or gallop madly after foxes, our language would grow rustic or childish, our dress slovenly, our persons nasty, our manners rude and coarse: poetry, music, painting, elegance, wit and humour, would be lost from among us, the ease of affability, politeness, obligingness, and the pleasures of sprightly conversation, be things unknown. How will you keep your children from rolling in the dirt any longer than while you stand over them with the rod; how bring the school-boy to aim at anything more than just performing his task? how prevent your sons from consorting with the black-guard, or your daughters from romping among the grooms?

Now to confess the honest truth, I am afraid if this evil weed were totally eradicated, so as to leave no fibre of it remaining any where, we should find business of all kinds go on very slowly in the world: for we have for the most part such a lumpish indolence in the clay of our composition, such an insensibility to all beyond the present impulse of appetite, as cannot ordinarily be rouzed to action without this fiery drug; or where other

other passions do instigate, they would make mad work unless this were employed to check them by its counter-action. Yet these benefits do not hinder it from being a weed of poisonous quality, for it is well known that poisons are often antidotes against one another, and many of them are used as medicines: yet there is no prudence in applying them where the case does not absolutely require it, nor other remedies may be thought of that will succeed as well. For my part I cannot help being persuaded that education may be carried on as effectually without any tincture of vanity: I found no occasion for it with my Serena and my Sparkler, on the contrary, I endeavoured sedulously to pick out every seed as fast as sprinkled by any old woman of their acquaintance: and I have the pleasure to find they have made as good proficiency in every little accomplishment I could give them, have as much reputation in the world, and are as well received even among persons of quality as I could wish. As to boys I cannot speak upon experience: I had vanity enough while a school-boy; as soon I could read currently, having gotten some books of chivalry, I determined upon making the conquest of the world; but being of a weakly constitution and continually bumped about by other

boys,

boys, I found this scheme impracticable, so at thirteen resolved to write a poem finer than Homer or Virgil. Before I went to the University, being taught that the solid sciences were more noble than poetry, I purposed, as soon as I should have made myself perfect master of logic, to elucidate all useful truths, and banish error from among mankind. What benefit these ambitious projects may have done me I know not: perhaps my present labours might be owing to some remains of them, for I well remember that while the design of these dissertations lay in embryo in my head, they promised a much more shining appearance, than I find them make now I can review them upon paper.

If masters can find none other way of bringing the lads to take their learning willingly unless by raising an emulation among them, I would not debar them from this benefit: no more, if a nurse has none other way of keeping her child in order than by frighting him with an old man in the cupboard who will take him away when he is naughty, would I be so indiscreet a freethinker as to dispute the reality of the old man: for it is better the child should be kept good by superstition, vanity, or any other means, than not good at all. But there may

be

be a commendation which has no personal comparison in it, and the pleasures, the advantages, the credit of a proficiency in learning, may be displayed in alluring colours without suggesting a thought of superiority over others, or of equalling the topmost. I have acknowledged before, that it is a very delicate point to distinguish between the desire of excellence and the desire of excelling, and the one is very apt to degenerate insensibly into the other: yet I think it may be effected by a skilful and attentive tutor, and the former preserved in its purity will answer all good purposes more effectually without endangering the inconveniencies expectant upon the latter.

As for persons in public character, I believe they must be allowed a larger dose than ordinary, because I know of none other incentive vigorous enough to carry them through the continual application, the toils, the self-denials, necessary for performing great services: unless it be a hearty public spirit founded upon the strong habitual persuasion of an indissoluble connection between the general interest, and private. Whether what I have before offered concerning the divine Equity and universal dominion of Providence, may contribute a jot towards introducing such persuasion, or may put others of greater

abilities

abilities upon enforcing it more effectually, I cannot pretend to augurate: but I fear it will not be made to prevail among mankind presently, unless the Millennium should arrive in the current century, as some commentators on the Apocalypse have foretold. With respect to great merchants and traders, who have just extended their commerce and experience to a pitch that renders them capable of being more serviceable to their country than before, since they may be presumed to have entered upon their professions solely with a view of gain, if they should ever outlive this passion, I would prescribe them a large potion too for the public emolument. Then the poets, players, fidlers, and the like, as they rarely make a fortune; and their occupations drudged in day after day can be no emolument to themselves, they can do nothing for our entertainment further than driven by mere necessity, unless you keep up their spirits continually with a dram of the same.

But though I am so indulgent to the use of this noxious drug, where it cannot be done without, yet as apothecaries when dispensing a recipe wherein antimony, solanum, laudanum, or mercury is an ingredient, are extremely careful to weigh the exact quantity, because a grain too much might prove fatal

fatal to the patient: so would I not have a speck of vanity admitted more than absolutely necessary for the case, but every redundance of it mortified, or rather the whole so far as feasible made to change its quality by drawing off the thought from a comparison of persons to that of things, which we have seen before will work as vigorously where it can be obtained in equal degree.

16. And the better to satisfy ourselves of there being a real difference between the desires of excellence and of excelling, we may remark how very frequently the one leads astray from the other, fixing the attention upon show and appearance, rather than upon solid substance and intrinsic value. It chooses to move alone in a narrow sphere, where nothing noble or important can be achieved, rather than share jointly with others in the movement of mighty engines by which much good might be effected. Where did the desire of excelling ever glow more intensely than in Cæsar, whose favourite saying we are told was this, That he had rather be the first man in a paltry village, than the second in Rome. Did not Alexander, another madman in the same species of frenzy, chide his tutor Aristotle for publishing to the world those discoveries in philosophy he would have had reserved

for himself alone? But if he esteemed learning an excellence, it would have been a more excellent deed to have spread it with his conquests. It must be allowed that none ever surpassed the surpassers of mankind in the passion for comparative glory, unless it were the Devil, into whose mouth Milton has with great propriety put the like thought with Cæsar's, Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven: and we are told the same vainglorious being traverses the world with indefatigable zeal to destroy excellence wherever he can find it.

On the other hand, the most excellent works have been achieved without a mixture of vanity: Christ had none: his Apostles had none: but he taught them meekness and humility as a principal rule of conduct, and rebuked the sons of Zebedee on their betraying a slight inclination to excel. If we can suspect any of them of having a tincture, it must be Paul; and perhaps this might be the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, to whom were owing his angry overbearing style, and obscure, hasty method of argumentation, producing those dark speeches which the unwary wrest to their own destruction. With respect to the mention of white robes with palms in the hands, and sitting upon thrones to judge the twelve tribes

tribes of Israel, we may understand of those as we are taught to understand of some Jewish institutions, that they were given for the hardness of our hearts, but it was not so from the beginning, that is, not contained in the original design of rectifying the sentiments, but necessary indulgencies to human infirmity, which cannot always rise even to a religious zeal without a gentle lift from vanity. But the whole Papal system, most of the heresies and schisms, the corruptions and perversions of Christianity have sprung from the desire of domineering, overtopping, and excelling.

Then if we turn to the heathen sages, Lycurgus and Solon, those two excellent lawgivers, had none: Socrates, the prime apostle of reason, Euclid and Hippocrates, had none: whereas Protagoras with his brother sophists, Diogenes, Epicurus, Lucretius, the Stoics who were the bigots, and the latter Academics who were the freethinkers of antiquity, were overrun with it. And among moderns, Boyle, Newton, Locke, have made large improvements in the sciences without aid of vanity: while some others I could name, having drawn in copiously of that intoxicating vapour, have laboured only to obscure and perplex them. Pride is supposed to have been the Devil's fall: aspiring to be Gods worked the fall of Man: the first murderer

was made such by seeing his brother's offering better accepted than his own: we see instances daily of strifes, contentions, disturbances, disappointments, vexations, springing from the desire of excelling; and where most beneficial, it often proves like the cow that kicks down the milk she has given. Hence we may fairly conclude the world would go on infinitely better if men would learn to do without it: and we may rank it among those evils permitted by Providence in order to bring forth some unknown good therefrom, and which ought never to be submitted to voluntarily, unless for the same reason as we submit to some great displeasure, for the sake of removing or escaping a greater.

17. This being the case, it seems the greatest of all absurdities that men should be proud of their pride and vain of their vanity: yet we often see it made the topic of panegyric that such a hero disdained to do anything like other folks; that he could not bear to rank among the rest of his species, could not be satisfied without surpassing all that went before him, and eclipsing all his contemporaries, but aimed always at eminence, and being more than man. But these are proper topics of satire as indicating a selfish, narrow mind, fond of insulting and triumphing over his fellow-creatures, a shallow judgment

ment taken with a shadow nor ever reaching to the solid substance. For admiration is a bauble necessary to bribe children into their good, because little master will not learn his spelling book, nor miss hold up her head unless you tell them one will be admired above other children for his learning, and the other for her genteel carriage: so you must give them the rattle to entice them into the way that you would lead. The like artifice is ordinarily carried on throughout all the stages of education, and young people come out into the world with a resolution if not a confident opinion of excelling every thing they find in it.

According as any part of learning is attained, applauses are less lavishly bestowed thereupon, and the lure turned upon the gaining some new accomplishment: for nobody applauds the overgrown school-boy for being able to read, nor the batchelor of arts that he can construe Virgil, because it would be needless after habit has rendered the practice easy, and the uses of it are discerned. So that applause is no more than an expedient to supply the want of discernment in youth, and raise an artificial desire of those attainments whose advantages are yet unseen: and whoever cannot act all his life without such instigation, nor discern the intrinsic value

and

and excellence of what he ought to do, continues a child all his life, without ever having his judgment ripened to the full maturity of manhood.

But if there be ability to perform extensive services, it is not in mortal man to go through all the labours and difficulties requisite for accomplishing them by the mere strength of public spirit, for we have not enough of this vivifying principle in our natures: so we must supply the place with an ardor for excelling, or shall never effect the good in our power. Very true, this I admit without hesitation: but then the filthy load of indolence and selfishness that burdens us, is an infirmity of our constitution, and the discharging it by such way as we can, must be regarded as a necessity of nature, which is certainly right to be complied with, but surely no matter of boasting. One might like better to have no necessities of nature, but this is not in our power, therefore I am not ashamed of having them, because I cannot keep my body in health without them; yet I should never think of bragging that I went across the yard regularly, nor making that a topic of panegyric upon any body. It may be proper for jockeys and running footmen to keep themselves spare and light by cathartics, and if their profession demands such regimen, I cannot

not blame them for practising it. So if Alexander and Cæsar could never be easy off the stool, I would not deny them that needful utensil, so long as their way of life and incessant hurry of enterprize required a mind perpetually alert, and they laboured under a paralytic insensibility to public good and intrinsic excellence, not to be removed without continual evacuation: nevertheless, it might have become them better to have concealed both their infirmity, and method of discharging it from all, than expect upon these accounts to be made the subjects of adoration.

18. But this lax habit, how much soever allowable where there is a long career of public service which cannot be run through without it, little deserves our recommendation for the benefit of the patient himself: it may sooth his fancy for the present, as I have met with some people who profess to find vast amusement in the meditations of a water-closet, but when once grown inveterate, there is no stopping it until it has worried him off his legs and proved fatal at last. Your perpetual rhubarb-chewers of vanity get a canine appetite which the most luxurious success cannot satisfy: they never leave running from one splendid folly to another, till they destroy themselves. If Persia be subdued, our hero-errant must seek adventures

tures at the Ganges: if the army mutiny against being carried out of the known world, he must lead them over the Egyptian desarts to force an adoption from Ammonia Jove: if no further conquests remain, he must outbrave the elements and defy the chilling power of Cydnus to do its worst upon his constitution: if strength of nature, or fortune, kinder than he deserved, carry him safe through this imminent danger too, the young Ammon having nothing left to surpass on earth, will needs surpass his brother Bacchus, in the godlike attribute of drinking, so he swallows the grand Herculean cup again and again, until at last he succeeds in washing life away.

Nor let the potent flatter themselves that this thirst of glory is peculiar to them, for it is to be found among fidlers and sonnet-makers; and multitudes, who have no prospect of ever rising to fame or power, yet indulge themselves in vain imaginations of directing, chastising, governing, and exercising powers they have not: to which perhaps the study of romances and novels may have not a little contributed, by leading the persons conversant in them to fancy themselves actors in scenes similar to what they have seen described. This humour endangers the like consequences as ambition though in a lower

a lower degree; for our ideas being apt to run spontaneously in the trains whereto they have been accustomed, there is a great hazard that some parts of the character assumed in reverie will slip unawares into the conduct in real life, which may occasion great improprieties of action and grievous inconveniencies. For the like reason it is a very pernicious though too common effect of parental fondness, to breed up children with a notion of their extraordinary parts and accomplishment, or any other unparalleled external, or bodily advantage: for being taught to look upon themselves as superior to every thing else, they will naturally despise what is suitable to their talents and situation, drive at things improper or impossible, gain a general ill-will, and perhaps run themselves into broils by claiming a respect and deference not belonging to them.

19. If we examine how we come by this passion for excelling, it will give us no very favourable opinion of it: some may suppose it innate in great souls, and so many other sentiments have been suppose innate, because neither the time nor the methods are remembered in which they were introduced. But nature gives us none other propensity than for pleasure: so the child can be easy and pleased itself, it cares not and observes not

what

what happens to other people; and some little familiarity with objects gained by a course of time, must be allowed to give the knack of comparing, and discerning its superiority above other children. How then is this most usually acquired? not by rational discovery, not by maturity of experience, nor the documents of prudent instructors, but by the nurse, the servants, or the mother, improved by daily examples of others possessed with the like passion, and perfected by the acclamations of the mob, or interested encomiums of flatterers. Everybody says it is a fine thing to shine in comparison, it pleases because it pleases, for other reason they will give none: if you pretend to doubt of it, they wonder you can doubt, and answer with exclamations at your peculiarity.

Nor can other good reason for self-valuation be found, unless that it urges to strive in the attainment or performance of things useful or excellent: therefore so far as it answers this purpose it is justifiable, but no further; and this rule may ascertain both the measure and the objects whereon it ought to be placed. But it carries nothing intrinsic independent on that service to recommend it, not even the privilege of being uncommon, as those who are most vain of it fondly persuade themselves: for nothing is more common

mon or vulgar than the desire of excelling; the Roman mob had it as well as Cæsar; and that was the reason they admired his grandeur, because they thought it a charming thing to possess. Every one of them would have been overjoyed to have been Emperor, but he alone had the means afforded him of gratifying his desire: so the difference, so much vaunted of, was none other than between a man whose appetite lies quiet because he has no victuals, and another in whom the cravings are doubled by the sight of dainties lying within his reach. But the means of gratification he had no title to value himself upon, they being extraneous to himself, the gifts or rather the loans of nature and fortune, not the property of the possessor.

For we have found no reason in the course of our enquiries to imagine a difference in the spiritual substances of men, which are themselves, every thing corporeal being adventitious and separable from them: but they are all equally capable of receiving whatever perceptions are impressed upon them, and moving whatever material particle comes within the sphere of their activity: so their powers of perception and action depend upon the configuration or present state of their bodily machine, and mental organization.

But if this be too dry and abstruse argumentation

mentation for the master of the world, let us ask whether it was his own exploit that he was born in imperial Rome, of a patrician family, and name which the heralds could derive from the Trojan Iulus, instead of being the son of Alphenus, the shrewd-working cobler. Mr. Waller thinks, Great Julius in the mountains bred, perhaps some flock or herd had led: the world's sole ruler might have been but the best wrestler on the green. But then nature must have furnished him with a stout nimble pair of legs, or he would have hardly aspired to throw all his brother bumpkins. Nor was birth and bodily activity enough without an exquisite texture of brain enabling him to call all the Roman citizens by name; and dictate to three amanuenses together. And yet with all these bounties of nature to befriend him, he might have lost all the fruits of them by want of proper tendence in his childhood; a little negligence of his nurse might have made him ricketty, an unlucky bump upon the head rendered him stupid, or idle tales of Fauns, Satyrs, Lemures or Divinations, filled him with superstition so as to become weakly, hyppish, and pusillanimous ever after. Neither, without the violent struggles between the nobles and populace, would he have had any encouragement to think of overtopping his compatriots.

compatriots. Had any of these circumstances fallen out amiss, we may presume he would have had little share of that noble spirit of ambition, which made him prefer being the first man in a village before the second at Rome.

20. It is a trite observation that the silliest people are the vainest, and if such chance to be placed in high fortunes, which make them the admiration of the generality, they are excusable from their imbecility to resist the force of sympathy: but that persons of large understandings and strong natural parts should be driven along by the torrent, seems out of character; that those who pretend always to lead, never to follow, should yet follow implicitly the superficial notions of a populace, should take their ruling principle from the babblings of a nursery, be deluded by the current forms of vulgar language to judge of things by comparison, may be thought matter of astonishment. Such, of all men, ought best to know the grounds of their own sentiments, to choose their persuasions, and form their estimation for themselves independently on popular bias. If they perceive themselves unable to run briskly enough in the career they have found intrinsically laudable as being intrinsically beneficial, without the aid of vanity, they have reason to be mortified at their inability rendering the assistance

sistance of such a dangerous auxiliary needful, but none to let it gain upon them a hair's breadth further than that necessity requires. For vanity is a passion, and the passions though sometimes excellent servants, always prove bad masters.

It has been shown in the Chapter on Free-will, that we are guided in all our motions with as unerring certainty as the best managed horse: we do not always know which way our rider will make us take at the very next turning just before us, much less at miles distance. Our appetites and passions are the spurs and bridles that govern us, by which we are made to walk, or gallop, to amble or curvet, to toil against the steepy hill, or rush down the dangerous precipice, to take the adventurous leaps of folly, or plunge into the sloughs of vice. These are the impediments abridging our freedom, and stirring up that contrariety of Wills within us, which, whenever we feel a want of liberty, was the occasion of our thraldom. Nor can we be certain whose dominion we lie immediately under; it is not impossible there may be subordinate governors, creatures of a higher species, who serve their uses upon us as we do with beasts of draught and burden: this impeaches not the government of Providence, whose universal plan comprizes all degrees of subordination,

subordination, adjusting them severally to the general design.

What though a sparrow lies at the mercy of some unlucky boy that has gotten a string about its leg, still we know both from reason and Scripture, that it falleth not to the ground without our heavenly Father. Yet nobody would wish to be in the condition of the sparrow with his leg in a string, nor fall under the thraldom of any creature. The evils permitted by Heaven, though designed to work out some greater good, nevertheless are always grievous in some part of their operation: how much soever they may tickle the fancy at first, the wise man will see this is only a bait to to tempt the heedless gudgeon; and will strive to avoid them whenever he can.

Among those evils, vanity ought to be counted one, as containing no solid substance to create an intrinsic value, or give it title to be denominated a good: it has none other ground than the delusion of an imaginary propriety in what are really the goods of nature or fortune deposited in our keeping. So that the best furnished stand in no better case than the ass in the fable carrying the image of Cybele: the opening crowd fall prostrate on either side as he passes, but their adoration is paid to the Goddess not to the beast, who would sell for more at a fair than his

his brother Long-ear, carrying two bundles of rags with a gypsy brat in each of them. But alas! we we poor strutting mortals are not such persons of consequence as Cybele's ass: we none of us carry the whole Goddess fully dressed in all her gorgeous robes and precious symbols: we creep in long procession one behind another, each bearing something from the sacristy.

The great and potent carry her crown embattled with turrets: the rich and opulent carry the gold and silver vessels for her sacrifices: the magnificent and elegant her nice-wrought robes and needle-pointed vestments: the beautiful and witty her flowers, embellishments and perfumes: even the dancing-master, the milliner, the French friseur, and Italian singer, have gotten a rag of Cybele powerful enough to draw transports of admiration from connoisseurs. Those laden with useful knowledge or accomplishment, carry some of the most valuable of her jewels: yet still they are her's, not the beast's that bears them; nor do they draw much admiration by their own lustre, unless set off with a multitude of false sparks and a deal of silver flourishing after the modern taste. Virtue itself is but an inner garment, the fine linen kerchief worn nearest the bosom of the Goddess; for though we must

acquire it for ourselves, yet the abilities, the opportunities, the inducements previous to the acquisition, were of foreign growth imported hither from celestial regions.

21. Thus we see how little reason there is to value ourselves upon any thing we possess, whether external, bodily, or mental advantage, whether accidental, or the produce of own industry: for we do not possess in property but only as usufructuaries, and we know the lading will be taken off our backs, if not sooner, yet at the end of our journey through life; but for what new charge shall be entrusted with us for our next journey, we depend upon the bounty and merciful kindness of Heaven. And this may account for the distribution of applause being made among persons so disproportionately to the real value of their endowments and actions; because upon this score they merit none, but solely for the sake of the good effects expected to ensue upon bestowing it. Therefore praise and reward are most discreetly applied to the novice, the giddy, the shallow, and the selfish, who have none other motive to bestir themselves in a good course; for where a man has no sense of his duty, you must bribe him to it if you will have it done: but whoever pretends to labour in pursuit of virtue or moral science, has least reason of any to

repine at missing his share, because to him least of any it is either needful or safe, but much of it would vitiate his virtue, and turn his ardor for knowledge into mere pretence, deceiving even himself.

For virtue loses her essence, becoming self-interest, when the eye fixes constantly upon the gratification or profit beyond; and when the credit of making discoveries comes to be the object in view during the investigation, it hangs like a dead weight upon the judgment, warping away the thoughts insensibly from what is just and solid, to what is specious and glittering. Therefore there is no prudence in suffering a humour of vanity to hold up this object before us; for if it carry us faster than we could go without, it carries us like a runaway horse, so much wider out of our way. Nor need we solicit ourselves either for self-complacence or commendation from others; for provided we take care to shape our conduct aright, so much of either as can turn into wholesome nourishment will drop into our mouths without our seeking.

22. I have now done my best to know this siren Vanity, as the most likely means to escape it, for forewarned forearmed. I have endeavoured to turn it inside out, to discover its emptiness, to lay open its ugliness, and raise a disgust at the foulness it is found to contain

contain when divested of its coverings: for it is the reproach of human nature, it breeds like vermin in the corruptions and infirmities of our constitutions, it is an epidemical disease spreading like the pestilence: for the trifling world around us so fills the air with infection, as the London smoke does with blacks, that we can neither keep ourselves nor our furniture tolerably clean without continual washings and scrubbings. It is such a dissembler there is no getting rid of it entirely, when you go to hunt it down most eagerly it will follow close at your elbow, mingling among your train, like an accomplice of a pick-pocket, who joins in with the croud as one of the pursuers. For a man may be vain of his exemption from the vanities he sees in others, or more vain of his having no vanity at all himself: when once he begins to say in his own mind, nobody has less vanity than I, he has more than he knows of, for all advantageous comparison foments it. One would think the contemplation of our own follies and fond imaginations should be the surest recipe to mortify it: but sometimes the contrary falls out by our growing vain in the comparison of our former with our present selves. We may take pleasure in abusing our nature to exaggerate our corrections of it, in example of the greatest sages of anti-

quity, who have performed wonders that way: puffed up with the conceit of how much we should cheat Zopyrus the physiognomist, and how our friends who know us would laugh as heartily at him as Alcibiades did, if he were here to try his skill upon our features.

Therefore it is the emptiest of all vanities to fancy ourselves utterly void of it; this lulls us into a security that leaves open the door for many others to intrude: it were better to possess our minds with the impossibility of escaping perfectly, and then we shall stand more upon our guard against treachery within, which would let in new enemies upon us. I think I may answer for the benefit of this prepossession and consequent attention upon experience, having every now and then perceived some lurking vanity stealing slily in through crannies where one would least expect it, which convinces me there are traitors within, though I cannot yet find them out. All one can do with respect to the poison unexpelled, is to disperse it upon the skin, as physicians draw a gout they cannot cure, away from the nobler parts. So taking for granted I must have some fund of vanity in my composition as well as other folks, it is better to let it evaporate in odd thoughts, quaint expressions, sparkling similies, and long-

long-spun allegories, than work into the sinews and marrow of argumentation. Perhaps there may be no hurt in sprinkling something that will startle and rouze the Reader when beginning to nod over a dry subject: and if he have a spice of the common malady himself, he will feel a soothing pleasure in reflecting how much more gravely and decently he could have managed the same topics.

But in all serious enquiries it will prove a most dangerous enemy, creating an interest in some particular issue, before it is seen which way our premisses will naturally lead, and so employing reason in the servile task of maintaining a point, rather than its proper office of discovering a truth.

Therefore I must endeavour to guard against this invader of liberty as well as all others, proceeding with a becoming courage and vigilant circumspection, not overawed by great authorities, nor frighted by terrors of criticism, yet keeping a reverence for received opinions and just deference for the judgment of others, bold, not arrogant, in delivering my thoughts, not pretending to dictate, but offering for consideration, cautious of giving offence, turning things to examine them on all sides before they go from me, and regardful of consequences, sedulous

to

to do my best, but content if that best shall prove but little, not having the vanity to disdain small services or even imperfect hints where I can do no better. Under the conduct of these guides I purpose to issue forth on my progress with a resolution, for I can but resolve, not undertake, to preserve a sober decent freedom throughout, with a perfect indifference to every thing beside truth, use, and reconcilement.

CHAP. X.

THINGS ABOVE REASON.

AS hard as I have been upon vanity in all its branches throughout the preceding pages, I am far from condemning a just regard to reputation: for this will prove a sanction to a man's own judgment of that rectitude which he makes the rule of his conduct, and gain him that willingness to receive his assistance without which his labours can be of very little benefit to anybody besides himself. Therefore before I proceed further, I must guard against what is most apt to do injury to the credit of a work, the expectation of greater

greater matters to be contained in it than were intended. If the Reader be kindly disposed, he will reduce his expectations so low, as but just enough to leave him a curiosity of listening to me: should he afterwards by great chance find more than he expected, the disappointment will hurt neither of us; whereas a disappointment the contrary way might do him a displeasure, and me a discredit, we do not either of us deserve.

Perhaps it might be imagined from some former passages and from the great preparations made to fit myself for such an enterprize, that I am going to make a perfect reconcilement between revealed Religion and natural, in all their branches. I should be glad to do so much, and I believe it possible to be done, provided both be taken in their genuine purity, stripped of all the disguisements, and foreign mixtures cast upon them by unwary or ill-designing persons: but the task exceeds my skill and abilities. However, I mean to do the best I can towards it, which yet I did not think myself likely to do without cautious preparation. So my own abilities must be the scanty limits to determine the choice of my subjects: I shall take such only in hand upon which I seem likely to offer something pertinent to the main purpose, leaving all the rest to more masterly

masterly performers: well satisfied if I can effect the reconcilement in some few points where it has been commonly thought desperate, and not without hopes of doing something that way which may encourage abler workmen to make larger advances upon the same design. This attempt I have all along had in view from the very first, and have dropped a hint of it in § 57. of the Vision under figure of Gellius's interlineations, the traces whereof I am now beginning to recover.

I must desire likewise it may be remembered that my course has lain all along within the precincts of human reason, nor do I mean to pass the barriers now, for fear of wandering out of my knowledge: therefore shall not meddle with the external evidences, as belonging to another science I am not versed in. There are able champions enow among the divines to handle these weapons, to examine their just weight, to poize and point them rightly against the gainsayer: too many to need my feeble assistance, who might only stand in their way by my unskilful management. So I shall confine myself to such of the doctrines and duties on both sides whereof I can find a natural, unforced explanation, which may render them compatible, or sometimes corroborative of one another,

another, so that instead of being detached seemingly discordant tenets, they may grow into one compact body, having a connection and vital circulation running throughout the whole.

2. The first object most expedient to begin our trial upon seems to be the ascertaining the proper province and jurisdiction of Reason; for here the parties usually become litigants on setting out: and till they can be brought to some agreement upon this point there is little hopes of travelling amicably in any other part of their journey. The Believer is perpetually warning men to beware of reason as a blind fallacious guide, exhorting them to submit their reason to faith, to believe things their understanding cannot fathom: nay some have gone so far as to insist that we see all things in God by the eye of faith, and that our natural faculties discover nothing to us with a certainty to be depended upon. The Rationalist will admit nothing of all this, for he mantains that reason is the only faculty we have to help ourselves with, therefore if we discard this guide, we must grope in the dark without any guide at all: nay, insists that no man can help following it whatever he may fancy to the contrary, for whoever takes things upon the credit of another does it upon conviction of the other's knowledge and veracity, without which

which he would not heed him. Thus far we must acknowledge him in the right, and so he possibly may be without his antagonist being altogether in the wrong, if the latter have a different idea of reason: for while there remains a variance in this particular not taken notice of, they will only play at cross purposes, and may dispute for ever without any effect: therefore it seems advisable to endeavour settling clearly what are our ideas of reason, before we go on to consider what it will do.

Reason in its fullest extent, comprehends every inlet whereby light can break in upon us, the judgment of the senses, the learning received by instruction, investigations of our understanding, and the conclusions left in our mind thereby: and is synonymous with sense or discernment, by which we estimate the reality of any appearance or truth of any proposition suggested. In this comprehensive latitude it must be taken when we pronounce it the sole faculty we have to help ourselves with, which were not true if spoken of any particular means of knowledge exclusive of the rest. But we often distinguish between reason and appearance, reason and information, reason and experience, reason and authority, which are considered as so many distinct sources from whence knowledge may be derived; for what we are told and what we have

seen

seen we do not discover by reason, which need only be employed when other means are wanting or unsatisfactory: and in some such restrained sense the term must be understood by whoever talks of submitting reason to another guide.

But I cannot help observing, there seems a little inconsistency in the procedure of both parties: for the man who would persuade another to give up his reason plies him with arguments to enforce his miracles, prophecies, and other evidences, wherein he appeals to that very reason he so totally decries. On the other hand, he that insists upon reason being the sole faculty, which no man can help following if he would, has no ground to charge another with casting aside his reason, which is not possible for him to do: for the Spanish villager sees no reason to distrust his confessor in any thing told him, so follows the faculty he has as steadily as the most enlightened freethinker.

3. Therefore reason, to be made the subject of a dispute, must import something that is not the sole principle of assent, but capable of being deserted for some other guidance, and we must seek for some more determinate idea of it than is ordinarily to be found among disputants. And if we attend to the language of mankind, I think it will be found, that reason denotes that set of princi-

ples

ples or judgments stored in the mind from experience or other sources: for when we say a thing stands to reason, or is discordant from it, we mean thereby that it coincides or disagrees with the notions we have already entertained. Now were we masters of mathematical certainty, our present judgments would be an infallible test to try all other evidences by, according as we perceived them repugnant or reconcileable thereto: but this not being the case, it would be the most unreasonable thing in the world to resolve against ever departing from our present judgment upon any evidence whatever, or to do it unless the new evidence overbalance the old.

Thus far we may go without offence to either side, but submitting implies something more than barely balancing the evidences, it carries the idea of a voluntary act to take off weight from the scale of present opinion: and when we reflect how often prejudice and passion slip into the balance, we shall see the expedience of submitting our reason by sedulously lifting out the weights they have cast in. On the other hand, if another would throw his prejudices and passions into the opposite scale, there is as much expedience in resisting, as there was in submitting in the former case. I shall not enter into the contests concerning the side whereon the prejudices lies: each opponent constantly charging

charging it upon the other; it is enough to warn both against the danger and unreasonableness of resolving either to exact or refuse submission at all hazards; let them use their best industry to find out the proper times for either.

But it is said there are some principles so strongly confirmed by constant experience, that though they have not mathematical certainty, they carry so full a degree of assurance, as no weight of testimony or other subsequent evidence can overbalance without aid of violent prejudice or passion, which is the circumstance making resistance expedient. Now I cannot easily admit that we may be so well assured of any principle as to render it absolutely impossible there should be any new evidence strong enough to overthrow it upon a dispassionate examination. We know for once this rule failed, when the Indian king discredited all the Dutchman had said before, upon hearing him assert, that in Holland, the cold was so intense as to make the water hard enough to walk upon: for we can scarce be better assured of anything than he was that if a greater degree of cold could make water hard, a less degree must proportionably stiffen and approach it towards hardness, which was contrary to constant experience.

But then as in the present disputes there

is

is no room to expect such extraordinary evidence as may deserve the preference to all our old stores, but they are carried on by reasonings of man with man, upon the foundations lying open in common to all; I see no cause to admit exceptions against this rule, nor expedience even of listening to the proofs offered by a fellow-creature in support of a point directly counter to the clearest, best-established principles of reason, unless by an experimental application he can produce the testimony of our own senses. If a man told me he drank out a bottle yesterday after dinner, I might take him at his word, because I see nothing in my ideas to hinder that he might do it: but if he added, that as soon as he had drank out the wine, he crept into the bottle himself, this appears so discordant to my clearest conceptions, that I should deem it superfluous to let him call for witnesses to attest the fact, or enter into a long argumentation to prove the possibility of it. I should cut the matter short by desiring him to send for the bottle, and if he would let me see him creep in again, I would engage to believe he had done it yesterday.

But the misfortune is, we are apt to mistake the extent of our rule by mistaking that of our reason: the strong glare of our clearest evidences makes them seem to cover more ground

ground than they really do, by which means we are led sometimes to imagine them contradicted in matters whereof they are wholly silent. Hence comes the distinction between things contrary to reason, and things above reason, that is beyond the limits of its reach. For sure none will be so hardy as to require assent against reason in points whereof the party stands in a situation to judge for himself: nor will any avow his resolution to refuse all other evidences, when he has no rational grounds from his own fund to determine either way. But the great difficulty lies in ascertaining what is above, and what contrary to, reason: there are perpetual disputes upon this article, some looking upon their non-comprehension as a certain mark of the contrariety, while others would impose the most palpable absurdities under the notion of their being above reason. The vulgar are generally too credulous, because their reason being narrow, there is little room to contradict it: and the learned too indocible, because having extended theirs to a larger field, they think every thing a contradiction that will not come within the sphere.

I have heard it remarked that parsons and lawyers are the most troublesome people in the world for one another to deal with, for being used to augmentation and rejoining, they will take nothing upon trust without having

having it explained to their satisfaction; one will receive none of your creeds upon the authority of the Church, unless you trace out to him every link of the connection between speculative points, and the happiness of mankind; the other expects you to show what foundation there is in justice, that if a man has ever so good a cause and sets out ever so clearly in his plea, yet if he happens to demur by averment, when he should have concluded to the contrary, judgment shall go against him. And if they acquiesce in these things for peace sake, yet they look upon them as empty forms of no real use, imposed only to amuse the vulgar, and give an importance to the persons skilled in them. But in all trades, professions, arts, and sciences whatsoever, there is something of mystery understood by the respective professor, and clearly discerned necessary for his practice, but extremely hard to be made out plain enough to satisfy the reason of a stranger.

I shall not attempt to describe the certain mark by which things above reason may be distinguished from things contrary to reason, as being more than I can undertake: this is best learned by that most useful knowledge I have recommended more than once before under the appellation of the science of ignorance. That there must be a difference,

ference, stands to reason itself, which can pass no judgment concerning things above it, therefore they can have no contrariety to it, for a witness cannot easily be contradicted in points whereon he deposes nothing: it belongs to reason to judge of the external evidence offered in support of them, but would be a contradiction in terms to suppose reason capable of pronouncing upon a previous contemplation of their nature. But how much soever men acknowledge in general the limited condition of their understanding, this is but a profession in form to gain the credit of modesty, or rather they think themselves sensible of the limitation when they really are not: for you seldom find them sensible of it in particular instances. They will readily enough admit an ignorance of external objects, because this may proceed from want of necessary information, and casts no slur upon their capacity: but are wonderfully backward to acknowledge it in their ideas of reflection; for fear this might lessen them in their own opinion by shewing a want of strength in their faculties.

5. Nevertheless, whoever will take the pains to reflect, may find instances of events whose reality he cannot doubt of, though the manner of their production be beyond all

possibility of conception. We know that if two bodies lie close together, by pushing one you may move both, yet it is not to be conceived how the hindmost can move before the other is gone away to leave a space for it to move into, nor how the foremost can move before there is any motion in the other to impel it. Therefore some who were unwilling to allow any thing above their reason denied the reality of all motion whatever: so that one may successively see Paris, London, and Edinburgh, without stirring an inch from one's place. We move our limbs with perfect command and expertness, without knowing any circumstance concerning the little fibres whereby we move them, how many they be, where they lie, or which of them belongs to each particular member. This is so inconceivable, that Hartley denied we ever move them at all, but that they are worked for us by the vibratiuncles of ether. We continually experience perceptions excited in our minds by the action of bodies upon our senses, yet there is no conceiving any relation between impulse and thought, nor what connection the modifications of body can have with the perceptions of spirit. Therefore Berkeley denied the existence of bodies, and that perception could be excited by any thing less than an immediate act of Omnipotence.

Omnipotence. The pulsation of the heart, the working of the lungs, the tone of circulating vessels in plants and animals, the powers of elasticity and electricity, the action of fire, the prodigious explosion of gunpowder, are things inconceivable in their causes and manner of operation.

These then are all above reason, and if we become infidels to every thing that is so, we shall lose the use of our senses, and strip ourselves of all knowledge and grounds of assurance of any kind whatever. We should attain a freedom of thought indeed with a witness, but such a freedom as a man would enjoy who should be carried up into the intermundane spaces beyond the reach of all attraction: he would have no force nor restraint upon him, it is true, but at the same time he would have no power of motion, for he could neither walk, nor swim, nor fly. The divisibility of matter is above our reason, whether you suppose it endless or limit it by the doctrine of atoms: yet how confidently have many maintained the opposite sides of the question. Mr. Locke has shown us what one might wonder we should need showing, for one would think everybody should know his own ideas without being told, but he has shown us that we have no idea of any thing infinite: therefore all infinities are incom-

prehensible, but who would make this a reason for disbelieving their reality? The most extravagant zealots for reason hold the existence of infinite space. Epicurus and Lucretius, who cannot be suspected of vulgar credulity, maintained the infinitude of atoms, and that infinite combinations were formed of them: nay further that there are innumerable Earths wherein the very same transactions are passing as in this, champions of liberty railing in North-Britons, versifiers squirting out careless rhapsodies of harmonious Billingsgate, and Searches puzzling their brains upon old exploded questions which nobody cares a pin how decided, as being of no consequence either for raising a fortune, or making a figure in the House of Commons, or shining in polite company.

Thus we see how all are driven by the testimony of their senses and exercises of their reason, in whatever various manner performed, to admit the reality of some things inexplicable, and consequently above reason as lying beyond the reach of our conception. And if visible nature be so replete with mysteries, we must expect to find them in contemplations on the supreme Being, in whom every thing is infinite, every thing incomprehensible: of whose acts we have no experience nor testimony of our senses, but can only

only catch an imperfect glimpse by their remote consequences in his works. We have no clear idea of creation, nor the passage from non-entity into existence and personality, because all productions we know of were made of pre-existent materials; yet most of us are convinced the Beings we see must have been created. We have no adequate notion of necessary existence, yet are all persuaded to a man it must belong somewhere, the sole question remaining, whether to one object, or multitudes. We cannot conceive a pure act determined originally by the agent without some foreign influence: for the acts of bodies proceed necessarily from external impulse, and our own determinately from previous lights and motives: yet we cannot fail of seeing, the First Cause must have acted before there was any thing prior to give an influence, or stand as the object of intelligence; nor could he have had intelligence such in kind as ours within himself, for that would be making him consist of parts, one to be discerned, the other to discern, and this passively, because in all discernment we know of, the mind receives involuntarily the action of something else upon it. We can conceive Time and Space neither dependent nor independent on the Almighty Will and pleasure; for if we take the former, then, if

it

it should so please God, there might be a time wherein there would be no time, and he himself might exist nowhere yet without ceasing to be, which seem to carry a contradiction in the terms: if the latter, then were time and space self-existencies, co-eternal with God himself, necessary assistants in his work of creation, by furnishing room, without which he could not have spread forth his worlds, and scope, without which his order of succession and courses of Providence could not have taken effect. Yet who of us doubts the reality of time and space, or that God had the fountain of all created Being solely in himself, without being beholden to any thing external for making his gracious intentions practicable?

The aversion against admitting any thing above reason, which nevertheless we have seen it is impossible to avoid, has been the fatal eddy drawing men into atheism: for because they could not conceive a substance which could neither be felt, nor seen, nor apprehended by any other avenue of sensation, they denied the existence of spirit; because they could not apprehend the manner of creation, they maintained the external self-existency of matter, never considering that their dread of credulity drove them upon points more inadmissible than any they rejected.

jected. For if we have any sphere of reason, it must include the properties of bodies wherewith we are daily conversant: but our experience of what may be done by various assortments of them, will not suffer us to imagine that any combination of them can form a perceptive Being. We know that vast quantities of motion are continually lost by collison and pressure, which matter can never recruit, having none other activity than what it derives from impulse of things external: we know the action of all substances within our notice depends upon certain adequate causes, that their difference of primary properties, their number or proportion to the space they float in, must have had a cause to determine them, therefore there must have been something prior to their operation and existence. All these things are not above reason, our notions of them being grounded on experience, therefore whatever reason disapproves concerning them we must pronounce contrary to it.

But when we go to dive into the original causes, we may expect beforehand to find them above our reason: for of these we have no experience nor other knowledge of their powers, than may be gathered from consideration of what their effects must necessarily require. So that when any thing appears hard of conception, if we examine what there

is similar within our experience to form a conception by, this will be the most likely method to discover whether it be above or contrary to reason: for it is one thing to find nothing like what is proposed in all our stores of experience, another to find them discordant to it; the one is only a negative evidence, the other a positive, which prevails over the former in all courts of judicature.

I have suggested these considerations in order to recommend the examination of our faculties together with the grounds they have to proceed upon, before we go on to examine other objects by them; and prevail on men to make a difference between not understanding how a thing can be, and understanding clearly that it cannot be, which I conceive would help greatly towards preventing hasty determinations and groundless confidences in many common affairs, but more especially in the contemplation of things invisible. Not that I have any particular end to serve by getting such persuasion to prevail, for I have neither pretence nor design to impose things hard of digestion: I have addressed all along to reason, endeavouring to make every thing as clear as the subject would permit by examples, illustrations, and explanations, and desiring nobody to adopt any of my notions further than he can enter into

into the reasons on which I present them. And I am so far from intending to depart from this method, that it will be the principal aim of my future progress to apply what I have hitherto collected for explaining difficulties, and bringing down if possible some matters ordinarily esteemed above reason to lie within its compass.

CHAP. XI.

MIRACLES.

After the declaration made in the beginning of the last Chapter against meddling with external proofs, nobody can expect me to enter upon the authenticity of any particular miracle: no more falls within my province than to examine the credibility of miracles in general, and whether all proofs offered in support of them ought to be rejected without hearing, as an absurdity so abhorrent to reason, that no weight of evidence whatever can overbalance. I shall have no occasion here to distinguish, as is frequently done and frequently disregarded, between immediate acts of the Almighty and supernatural effects produced by subordinate powers, supposed

to interfere in the operations of natural causes: because I do not recollect any objections lying against the credibility of one, that do not lie equally against the other. For that of the divine dominion not suffering the creatures to interfere, is rather an argument of the external kind, than of the intrinsic impossibiliy of their so doing.

It has been said that experience being the ground-work of all our knowledge, nothing ought to be admitted which is not supported by that: but let it be remembered that experience itself had a beginning, all things we can reckon among its stores were once new; therefore if nothing unsupported by it were to gain our assent, we should never have any experience at all. Or if it be allowed from the necessity of the case, to receive new acquisitions until we have gotten a competent stock and no longer, when are we to fix the time of having gained this competent stock? for children at seven years old have some experience, and a man at sixty may have discoveries offered him out of all the course of his former experience. Well, but we must not take experience too strictly, perhaps by supporting may be meant not-opposing: so that I may receive information of new matters whereof my former experience is totally silent, but nothing that contradicts the testimony

mony I have received from that. I shall not take pains to prove that, properly speaking, no new event contradicts experience, which deposes only concerning things past: that having been already done in a better manner than I can mend by Mr. Adams, in his little treatise upon this article, though possibly something of what I shall offer may have arisen from hints suggested there. But whether with strict propriety or no, certain it is we do talk of things contradicting experience; when we conceive it to have been so full as to give a thorough knowledge of the subject in question, whatever is offered concerning it that will not coincide with that, we term contrary to experience.

Nevertheless, experience itself will testify that such contrariety is not so invincible a bar, but that conviction can sometimes force away in spite of it. Equivocal generation was formerly the orthodox opinion founded on constant experience, by which men knew it was the nature of dust and putrefaction to breed vermin: but now universally exploded. It was holden to be against experience, that there should be sexes among vegetables, until observations upon the farina of lillies, upon the dust flying among the blossoms of mulberries, and the female date-tree becoming barren after cutting down the male,

male, brought the other doctrine into vogue. A few years ago the propagation of animals without sexes would have been thought contradictory to experience: notwithstanding which many have been since persuaded of the fact by their own experiments, or other persons' accounts concerning the fresh-water polypus.

2. Such instances, happening more than once or twice, might convince us that experience is not so infallible a guide, as to justify our refusing information from any other hand: for in truth it never makes us thorough masters of the subject; we may know enough for our present uses, but can never know there is not more to be learnt, beside what we have discovered. Our overweening conceit stands upon a hollow foundation, being nothing else than the persuasion that our idea of things comprehends their whole essence, whereas our discernment reaches not to their essence; we can only observe what effects they work upon our senses or upon one another, and from thence deduce imperfectly the powers belonging to them and causes operating upon them; but can make no just deduction, that there are not other powers and causes whose effects we have never yet experienced. Therefore, as has been argued in the Chapter on Judgment,

ment, we have no such thing belonging to us as absolute certainty: the notion of it springs from vanity, as if it were beneath us to act or think upon lower grounds. But it has been shown in the same place, that although certainty was not made for man, yet man may do well enough without it: the strongest assurance we can get upon the best grounds of experience is our proper guide, which we shall do right to follow; yet need not pay such implicit submission, as to pronounce it impossible we can ever have just cause to look aside upon some other object.

It will be said all this has nothing to do with miracle, for should we discover some new kind of operation unknown to the sons of men, we should still believe it natural, owing to a latent property always belonging to the bodies exerting it, though never before observed. Those who have changed their opinion upon equivocal or unequivocal generation, upon the sexes of blossoms, or upon the hatching of Polypus's, thought, we suppose, they had found out a secret in nature, not a force put upon her by superior power producing an operation she was not able to perform. Very well, but let us first examine what we are to understand by nature, for in some senses perhaps we may find that to be a secret of nature which we vulgarly

garly call supernatural. I do not know anybody of whose person and features we have a more unsettled idea than that same dame Nature, we all think ourselves extremely well acquainted with her: do but mention her name, and everybody knows whom you speak of without asking questions, and yet we are perpetually varying our idea of her shape and size: but it becomes profound speculatists, who set up for reforming the reason of mankind to know what they talk about before they descant upon it.

Let us observe to them, then, that nature is sometimes opposed to education, and natural endowments distinguished from acquired: we are supposed to run about in our childhood and speak our mother tongue naturally, but nobody learns Latin or dancing from nature, and custom is said to change our nature. Physicians are called in to relieve us from obstructions that nature cannot remove: farmers by cultivation make the ground yield them crops that it would never have produced naturally: gardeners by inoculation cause their trees to bear other than the natural fruits: and in general the term artificial stands in contradistinction to natural. Ingratitude, drunkenness, bestiality, treason, animosity between near relations, are termed unnatural. Yet I suppose in all these cases,

what

what is done more than nature can do, will hardly be counted supernatural: which shews that we use the term Nature in a more or less extensive sense according to the occasion whereon we apply it.

3. The word Nature when standing alone commonly denotes the properties of bodies and course of operations among them falling under our notice; the several species of animals, plants, fossils, and so forth, their production, preservation, their powers and qualities affecting one another: all which I take to be the objects of physiology, or natural philosophy, and whoever could understand them all compleatly, would be deemed to have a thorough knowledge of nature. Yet this idea of it will not fully suffice to carry us through our present question, which extends to a larger compass; the knowledge, the sentiments, the powers and actions of man, together with ethics, politics, mechanics, manufactures, commerce, and other arts and sciences dependant thereon, all which the naturalist has nothing to do with, yet must all be added to his stock to make up that nature whereof we may have experience, and beyond whose experienced powers we would pronounce every thing supernatural, and incredible.

But with this addition are we sure of having

having the whole of nature still? before we can proceed secure in confidence of having gotten all our materials together, we shall have this preliminary to contest. For there are those who think that from the view of this nature, they can discover another beyond, whereof this is only a part, and the rules whereby it is governed, only municipal laws of a single province within a boundless empire: and that there is a universal nature having general laws superior to the municipal, connecting all particular systems in one well-regulated polity under one supreme Governor. Now let our experience of this sublunary globe and the transactions upon it be ever so compleat, what can we know by it concerning the general polity, or how far that may, or may not over-rule the particular one provided here?

But you suppose the municipal laws are so provided as to make a part of the general, and therefore they will not be broken in upon, nor must we expect to see things conducted otherwise than by them, until transported into some other province, where there is another system prevailing. Why, so I suppose too, because I never yet saw an alteration made in them, and shall continue to suppose so until I see cogent reason to suppose otherwise, and I think I have shewn myself

myself throughout the course of this work, as hearty a friend to nature and experience as need be desired: nevertheless, this supposition, though a rational one is but supposition, amounting to a moral, not a mathematical certainty, nor strong enough to render all evidence whatever to the contrary invalid, or make it absolutely incredible that such should be produced.

For let us consider how far our experience deposes: that there are such powers of nature and such an order as we find operating and prevailing here, but with regard to all beyond it is totally silent: it informs us nothing concerning creatures invisible, what powers or views they may or cannot have, what inducements or restraints with respect to their interfering in sublunary affairs. Therefore, to argue in Mr. Adams's way, evidence offered to prove an interposition either of the divine power or invisible creatures, does not contradict experience, because it deposes to a point whereon that deposes nothing. All that experience informs us of, relative to the case is, the capacity of substances within our notice to receive positions and stations by foreign operation upon them: thus far then both evidences agree in their testimony, for what miracle does not work a change of sta-

tion in substances, or put them into a position we know them capable of receiving?

It is now an incontested principle that all matter is homogeneous, the difference in bodies arising from composition, or the different position of their component particles with respect to one another: so that wine consists of the same matter with water, every particle of one being capable of taking its place in the other, and of receiving the motion requisite to convey it into such place. But we never knew an instance of water changed into wine, otherwise than by a passage through circulating vessels of the vine and the grape, and perhaps in its way receiving an accession of other particles which never were in the composition of water. What then? we may still know that the matter composing those particles was capable of standing in such arrangement as would have made it water; and experience deposes nothing concerning other powers than those falling under our notice; whether they have or have not skill, discernment, and activity, sufficient to change the arrangement of matter in water, so that it shall instantaneously become wine.

In like manner we know by experience that matter is capable of standing in the arrangement

rangement of the human body performing circulation and other vital functions; and spiritual substance is capable of taking a station in such part of the composition where it may receive the notices brought by the organs of sensation; both which together make a living man. We know not what corporeal particle, nor what manner of adherence, holds the perceptive substance in vital union: however we know it is there, and when once dislodged, have no reason ever to expect its return, because we see the machine continually tend more and more to corruption. But we have no experience to assure us there are not other agents who have command enough over the motion both of corporeal and spiritual particles to reinstate them exactly in the stations we have already seen them capable of occupying, in which case the dead man would be restored to life: and until such assurance can be had, the fact must remain credible.

Since then we find by experience of natural motions that substances are capable of receiving miraculous changes, upon what grounds can we deny Almighty power capable of working them? or even pronounce peremptorily upon the incapacity of other powers? If there be a mundane Soul, such as I have described in treating upon that

article, extending everywhere, permeating every thing, perceptive and active throughout, intelligent in every part by communication of lights from the rest: I see nothing inconceivable in the thought of his turning water into wine, or restoring a dead man to life, or even making a new man by arranging the elements into a vital machine, and stationing therein one of his own component particles: this seems to me so far from being contrary to reason, that it does not rise above reason: nor do I find a difficulty in comprehending it so great, as in comprehending how I move my own limbs. If I believe no superior power does interfere to disturb the courses of visible nature, because I see no reason for it, it does not follow from thence, that I never can see reason: for there is a material difference between finding no reason for a thing, and finding a solid reason against it; the one suffices for me to withhold my assent, the other alone can warrant me to condemn it as incredible.

4. I do not know that it is needful to add any thing in particular upon Revelation, as a distinct species of miraculous operations: because I apprehend that it might be effected by an arrangement of particles or change of modification in our mental organization, similar to those made in bodies by the others.

Men

Men commonly conceive their dormant stores of knowledge to be something, they do not know what, whether substance or modification, or component part, lying in the mind itself, and therefore not capable of locomotion, or diversity of arrangement. I have examined this matter carefully in the Chapter on Judgment and other places, and found reason to conclude, that the mind or purely spiritual part receives nothing besides perception, nor can contain any thing it does not actually perceive: that in all perception there must be two things employed, one to discern, the other to be the object discerned; which object cannot be something within the substance of the mind itself, unless you will suppose her to consist of parts, some blind and imperceptive, producing no effect until touching the others' notice.

Therefore the objects must be exhibited by something external to the perceptive mind, which something I have termed the mental organization, the various arrangement or motion (for I do not pretend to determine which) of whose particles form the judgments that we discern: in a manner analogous to that of writing, where the shape and arrangement of the letters present the sense of them to your thought; or of speech where the modulations of sound produce the same effect.

Our

Our judgments in the natural way proceed ordinarily from instruction, conviction, or experience, but sometimes we find them arise from other causes: in dreams and delusions they are produced by mechanical operation; strong liquors, indigestion, external accident and passion, often make us judge very differently of things; eagerness of desire will assure us of success beyond all grounds of expectation, and terror magnifies dangers. Archbishop Tillotson says, that many people have told a lie so often until they believed it to be true: and we may have known persons who remembered having given a key or a paper to somebody else, and immediately after found it in their own pockets. All which shews that judgment is not passed upon knowledge in the mind itself, which we may presume would be immutable while deposited there, but upon representations exhibited in something else, which is capable of receiving changes from external and mechanical causes.

And though we have no ground from experience to think but these causes act naturally, yet since we have not experience of universal nature, that does not hinder the operation of other causes from producing different modifications, which will exhibit correspondent scenes of judgment for the mind

mind to inspect, and whatever the mind sees there from time to time, that is her present determination. Therefore, though I believe it never actually done, yet I conceive it very feasible in theory, that such a Being as we have imagined the mundane Soul, might hold discourse with a man by suggesting ideas to his thought, like those another would excite in conversation: and by this means instruct him in knowledge he could not have attained any other way, describe persons and transactions he never saw, declare to him future events that human sagacity could not discover, inspire him with sentiments, move his passions, and rouze up a spirit to any particular undertaking, more effectually than the most accomplished orator with all his powers of persuasion.

5. It may be said that all we have urged hitherto amounts to no more, than that there may be a power of making supernatural effects, but shews no probability that such a power ever is excited. I do not desire it should; I would have them still remain improbable, all I contend for is only a possibility: but things improbable have sometimes been known to come to pass, therefore improbability alone will not stop our ears against all evidence offered to prove their reality. Nevertheless, it may be denied that

we

we have yet made out even a possibility: because the acts of voluntary agents, and such we must suppose all workers of supernatural effects to be, for necessary agents can never stir a step beyond the laws of nature imposing the necessity upon them, may be rendered impossible by their repugnance to the character of the agent, how much soever they lie within his power to perform. A miser has it in his power to make ducks and drakes of his guineas; a nobleman to hire himself out at harvest as a common labourer; a fond mother to strangle the child she doats upon: yet we think these things impossible to be done by the persons to whom we know it is easily possible to do them; and this impossibility suffices to make the fact incredible. Now the character of infinite wisdom and goodness belonging to God, and the like character of universal benevolence and as boundless intelligence as created Being can possess, ascribed to the mundane Soul, will not leave it credible, that the original plan of creation should have been laid imperfect so as to need occasional corrections, or without such need that either would interpose to disturb the order of nature in any single instance, much less would employ their superior power in hurtful, idle, or trifling operations.

All

All this I very readily admit, as well the assumption, as the inference deduced from it: but do we know the original plan so perfectly as to be assured the lines of connection between the several systems comprized in it may never work an alteration in the laws of visible nature; or that some interpositions were not contained within the plan, and made essential parts of it. For why is it necessary that every supernatural operation must be a sudden expedient to supply an unforseen defect, and not a pre-concerted design interwoven among the order established for second causes? Nobody can well doubt but God might have caused the corn to sprout up spontaneously, or houses fit for our commodious habitation to grow out of the ground like trees: yet he has so contrived his laws of nature here below, as to make the interposition of human industry necessary to preserve this sublunary system from falling defective. What then should hinder but that he may have purposely framed his laws of visible nature incompleat without some supernatural interpositions to fill up the remaining spaces in his plan of universal polity? And whether these interpositions be made by immediate exertion of Omnipotence, or by ministry of the mundane Spirits, vulgarly called Angels, either upon express

express command or upon discernment of the expedience, is not material to our present purpose.

6. Then for things pernicious, wanton, and trifling, I must own it appears to me incredible that any such should be the work of God or his superior order of creatures: but are we such perfect masters of wisdom and goodness, as always to know assuredly what is, or is not inconsistent therewith? The conceit of this knowledge makes people think hardly of Providence for the few evils scattered about in nature, and has driven some to deny a Providence upon account of the many errors and wastes, worthless productions, and unavailing accidents, observable everywhere, in which they can see no use nor design. But we see not the half of nature, nor of the consequences resulting from events passing within our view, so there may be good fruits produced by things that yield nothing but evil so far as we can discern, and important uses in what appears to us unprofitable and frivolous: nor is it unlikely that the wisdom of God should seem foolishness to men, or the follies of men be turned by him to serve wise and excellent purposes. Persons following different professions and sciences are no competent judges of the pertinence of one another's proceedings: that may

may appear idle and nugatory to the unskilled, which the professor knows to be very material and necessary: much less can we undertake to pronounce upon the actions of creatures of different natures, or say with confidence what is becoming or important for them to do, and what unworthy their attention.

Some have amused themselves in a vacant hour with imagining what ideas the brute creatures must entertain of our transactions, supposing them endued with understanding and reflection like ours. It is certain that no understanding can proceed further than what it may strike out from the materials it has to work upon, all beyond must appear wilderness and amazement: therefore the animals having little intercourse among us in our affairs, nor means of information by speech, would have no conception of our politics, commerce, mechanics, mathematics, rhetoric, fashion, and other methods of employing our time, but our proceedings must appear for the most part strange and unaccountable. I have heard a story of some very valuable jewel or piece of plate in a house having been lost in such manner as to make it certain some of the family had taken it, but no suspicion could be fastened upon any particular person, for they all denied having

having any knowledge of the matter. The vicar was called in to examine them, but being able to get nothing out by his interrogatories, he engaged to discover the thief by art magic: for he had a cock among his poultry of wonderful sagacity, that being rightly prepared and situated, would know the touch of a light-fingered person in the dark; so he fetched the cock tied down upon a nest of hay in a basket, which was placed at the further end of a darkened room: the servants were ordered to go in one by one and stroke the back of the cock, who upon feeling the delinquent would instantly crow. They went in each of them alone and returned, but still the cock did not crow. Our conjurer seemed surprized, for he said he never knew the cock fail before, and surely they had not all touched him. Yes, indeed, and indeed they had. Pray, says he, lets see your hands. Upon turning them up, the palms of all except one were found as black as the chimney stock, for he had besmeared the cock's back with grease and lamp black, of which those who were conscious of their innocence, had taken a strong impression by giving a hearty rub, but the guilty person, though having no great faith in the cock's virtue, yet not knowing what tricks your learned men may play, thought it safest

safest not to venture, especially as his word must be taken, there being no witnesses in the room with him to see how he behaved.

Now imagine the parson's poultry possessing as large a share of the rational faculty as you please, they will never be able to account for these ceremonies undergone by the cock: but when he got home to relate his adventures, if there were any freethinking cockerills in the henroost, they would treat it as an idle, incredible tale; for there could be no use nor purpose in daubing his back, tying him in a basket, shutting him up in a dark room, and sending so many different people to rub him over. Certainly, say they, our daddy begins to doat, and vents his dreams for real facts: or else has been perching carelessly upon the edge of a tub until he fell backwards into some filthy stuff within it, and now would impose this invention upon the credulous vulgar among the chicken kind, to set us a pecking away the grease from his feathers, in hopes we shall foul our bills or spoil our stomachs so that we cannot eat, and then he will have all our barley to himself.

To return now to the human species: it is far from incredible, that our sentiments and transactions are of some uses to invisible orders of Beings, but what those uses are or how

how resulting, we have no sort of means to investigate: therefore it is impossible for us to know what thoughts or actions of ours might not be serviceable to them, which yet would not follow in the ordinary course of natural causes. We know that delusions have abounded in the world; and upon the principle of All things ordered for the best, we may presume there is some good use of their so abounding: why then may not the same aprehensions and state of mind be excited by real appearances, as are now effected by delusion? Thus much we may allow, that many a man has been persuaded of a superior power by means of his imagination, whose understanding was too dull, too superficial, or too little exercised ever to have been convinced by rational proof, and such persuasion, though leaving gross and erroneous impressions behind, yet is better than none at all. For my part, I see nothing absolutely incredible even in the common tales of witches, fairies, and apparitions: though they carry so strong an improbability as not to be overcome by any evidence I have yet met with in support of them. But I do not think so highly of my judgment as to take its decisions for mathematical demonstration, or imagine any improbabilities discerned by it absolutely invincible: a moral assurance

surance to the exclusion of all doubt is the highest pitch I can expect to reach, but I have sometimes found reason for doubting upon points whereof I had not any the least suspicion before.

7. With regard to the speculative credibility of interposition, I have observed on the Chapter on Providence that the constitution of all created intelligences, so far as we can comprehend of them, seems to require it: for if God had rested from his works from everlasting, having once for all given such a vigour and regularity to nature as that it might have proceeded on its course for ever without needing the further touch of his hand, all dependence and thought of him must have been utterly lost from among them, For he would have been deemed to have delivered them over to the establishment of second causes, with which alone they had concern: so the question whether all things had a beginning, or from what power derived, would have remained a matter of mere curiosity. And within the sphere of our experience we see what efficacy the opinion of divine interpositions has to preserve a sense of God upon the mind. It can hardly be denied, that much more than half the Religion of mankind grows from this root, which if you could totally eradicate, you would

would leave very little notion of him remaining in the world. Men at best would proceed upon the principles laid down at the conclusion of my first Volume, of consulting the good of others so far as their own temporal interests were concerned: and it must be great luck to prevail on them to practise so much goodness as that.

Then if we proceed from the abstractions of theory to reason upon facts, we shall find, as has been already urged in the same Chapter, that neither the present form of this Earth we inhabit, nor courses of the planets composing the solar system, could have been eternal, nor probably coeval with the existence of matter and general laws of solidity, impulse, attraction, repulsion, and motion: therefore, there must have been an interposition to produce the present order of visible nature out of the confusion of a Chaos, or out of some former order obtaining before. Thus here seems to be a positive proof deduced from experience that the divine Power, either by itself or by some sufficient minister, does interfere with the laws of universal nature in the production of a new system, which was not provided for by those laws: what then should hinder but that the like might interfere upon great and important occasions during the continuance of a system? Nor is

experience

experience wanting in the apprehension of most people of events happening among us daily, which upon reflection must be acknowledged miraculous in the strictest sense, that is, immediate effects of Almighty power without any second cause intervening.

One cannot always tell what grounds to go upon in arguing with particular persons, their notions being so various, and so often kept in reserve, as makes it difficult to know what they will admit and what they will deny. But it is the orthodox and current opinion, that the Souls of men were created at some time while the fœtus lay growing in the womb. But it must be acknowledged that no created Being, of how exalted a nature soever, can produce a new substance out of non-entity, or be employed as a minister in the operation. The laws and highest powers of nature can do no more than form compounds of the materials under their command; which materials, if corporeal, can at best make but an exquisite machinery, destitute of all perception and voluntary motion, unless some particle of spiritual substance be stationed therein drawn from another fund where it had resided before. But to breathe into the organized clay a breath of life nowhere existing before, so as that the composition shall become a living soul, must

be the work of no less than God himself. So that miracles are so far from being incredible or even uncommon, that we have them continually worked, as often as a child is born, if not as often as a woman becomes pregnant.

8. Perhaps these daily creations will not be counted miraculous, because happening daily, and nothing be admitted to bear that title, unless what is rare and extraordinary: but whether we give them the epithet or no, their essence remains the same, and there may be wisdom and expedience in a measure taken upon particular occasions, though it be not repeated perpetually. To reject every thing as incredible merely for its being strange and unusual, would be doing like the lowest of the vulgar, who scarce can be brought to credit any thing of the manners or ingenuity of foreigners, very different from what they have been accustomed to see: or like those who will not believe an historian relating that the beaux of king Edward the fourth's reign wore their shoes of such enormous length, they were forced to tie up the toes by a string coming from the knee, to prevent their doubling under them. So that this argument proceeds at best upon the principles of the nursery, for it is much the same with that used by my children's nurse, when upon see-

ing

ing a picture of my Euridice brought home, she cried Lauk! that cannot be like mistress, for she has never a blue gown. But if this anile objection must prevail with us, yet it will not hold good against the miracles most strongly contended for, which for some years during the Christian, and some ages during the Jewish dispensations, were so frequent that they can scarcely be called strange and unusual events, so much as an established method of Government.

Nevertheless, how much soever this objection may be the real obstacle with men against the credibility of miracles, they may not know it themselves; for it is neither miraculous nor uncommon with us to mistake the true grounds of our persuasions: and we find it now backed with another, namely, that the case of the miracles they reject, is not the same with that of the acts of Omnipotence exerted in the formation of a world, or the creation of Souls for children. For the first of these gave beginning to a system of nature not before existent, and the latter co-operate with the natural laws of generation to finish the work they must have left imperfect: but that a wise Governor should innovate upon the laws himself had provided, or break through them while subsisting unrepealed, still remains incredible.

To this I shall answer that all interposition does not make innovation in the laws established. What if water was once changed into wine, the laws of nature producing wine by the vine and the grape continue still the same. What if injunction was once given to cut off every soul of the Amalekites, the laws of humanity and mercy, of love even to enemies, still remain inviolate, and have been strongly inculcated by the same authority which issued the injunction. If we must be obliged to justify the ways of God by the proceedings of man, let us recollect there have been many suspensions of human laws upon particular occasions: we have known it done in our own times upon the Habeas Corpus act, that great barrier of our liberties, yet without derogating from the wisdom either of the law or the legislature.

And the interpositions now in question must appear less incredible when we consider the purpose for which they are supposed to have been made, not to supply defects in laws provided, but to manifest the dominion of the Governor: which it is notorious was so far overlooked, that many laboured arguments have been carried on in prose and verse, in seriousness and ridicule, to prove the laws self-ordained, without a legislature to enact them, or governor able to control them.

BOMBAY

them. Were there a kingdom so well policed as that all things might be kept in order everywhere by subordinate magistrates fully instructed in their duty; yet if the people in some distant corner, seeing nothing higher than constables and justices among them, should grow refractory, as thinking those officers acted upon their own authority, would it not be more than credible, that the prince should manifest himself by some signal interposition of power, to convince the mutineers of his dominion.

Then if we take the whole series of interpositions jointly, they may not unfitly be likened to those used in the formation of a world: for we may reflect how great an influence they have had upon the moral world which is a part of the natural, introducing a new system of thinking and acting, scarce less important than that formed at what is vulgarly called the creation, out of a chaos of ignorance, darkness, and uncertainty; or as the orthodox say, out of the ruins of an old system originally perfect.

From all these considerations I think it may be fairly concluded, that miracles are not essentially incredible, nor the evidences of them deserving to be rejected without hearing: and though not discoverable by reason founded on experience, yet neither are they

they contrary to reason, or experience, nor like the idle tale of a man who should pretend by his natural sagacity to have found out a method of flying about in the air; because we know the extent of human powers, and know that this exploit does not lie within them.

9. Nevertheless, credible as I have endeavoured to show them, I still hold them highly improbable: but that I may not give offence by being misapprehended, I must beg leave to explain my meaning in this position. It was not in my thought to pronounce upon the validity of the evidence offered in support of them, for it does not suit with the character I have assumed of a neutral, to determine any thing concerning their probability in the manner wherein they are introduced for everybody's examination: all I intended was to assert that in themselves, divested of their external proofs, they are not easy to be credited. So that supposing I had never heard of any such thing till this day, and just now some learned man were to tell me he had met with a book wherein were reported the stories of the burning bush, the rod turned into a serpent, the recalling Lazarus to life, and such like, I should think them extremely improbable: and though upon mature reflection, not absolutely incredible

(for

(for perhaps on first hearing I might deem them so,) yet requiring very weighty and cogent evidence before I could believe them.

For experience is our proper guide, the foundation of all our knowledge; If we are to place no confidence in that, we have nothing to trust to: therefore all deviations therefrom deserve justly to be suspected as false appearances until confirmed by reasonings drawn from experience, for those may sometimes convince us, that things must have happened otherwise than we have experimented, as in the case of creation, which we never saw an instance of, yet we may gather from what we have seen, that there must have been such an operation, either in time or from everlasting. Had we miracles worked among us the case would be different, for then after being satisfied upon careful examination that our senses had not deceived us, we should have their experience to attest the truth of the fact; which is the same evidence we have for common phenomena: but our evidence of supernatural events comes only by relation and traditionary proof, and this we must weigh in the like manner as we do other things whereof we have not the direct testimony of our senses.

We cannot penetrate into the constitution of nature nor essence of things, we can only observe

observe how they constantly operate in those instances wherewith we have familiar acquaintance, and what are the ordinary courses of Providence: which affords a just presumption, that nothing will fall out otherwise than we have experienced, and whatever relation varies therefrom must consequently be improbable, the improbability rising in proportion to the width of the variance. What has been may be, is a common saying, and a very just one: to which we may add, what has constantly happened in one manner may be presumed will always happen in the same, as being occasioned by certain causes which cannot operate otherwise. Therefore the operations of nature, so far as we have intimate acquaintance among them raise a just expectation that they will always continue the same course, together with a persuasion, that they ever have done so from their beginning to work: and every relation of a supernatural event, being contrary to this persuasion, or, as commonly expressed, contradicting experience, is highly improbable in itself, not to be credited without the strongest evidence to justify our assent.

10. To ascertain what evidence suffices to overcome this improbability might be impossible, for certainty was not made for man, nor have we any one channel of knowledge

to

to be depended upon as infallible: we can only collect our proofs on all sides, weighing and comparing them together carefully, and then every man must use his best judgment to determine upon the whole view of particulars. Undoubtedly the degree of improbability deserves its share in the estimation; for nobody in his sober senses would not credit one fact upon much slighter evidence than he should think necessary to establish the truth of another. Should a person unknown tell me there were two men boxing together in the next street, I might believe him, for such things happen every now and then among porters and carmen: should he add, that the combatants had the dress and appearance of gentlemen, I should think, to use the newspaper phrase, the thing merited confirmation: but if the like were told of two persons whom I knew to be men of grave deportment, good rank and character, there would need a host of witnesses to convince me of the fact.

Therefore, when we reflect on the just and natural weight of improbability, it seems rather too daring an enterprize of divines, when they undertake to prove their allegations, if we will only allow the Sacred Writings so much credit as we give to a common historian: for I cannot help joining with Middleton,

Middleton, that if some of the accounts recorded there were found only in Sanconiathon's Phenician history, no man of thought or learning would heed them, or at most regard them, otherwise than as fabulous and allegorical, concealing a moral which nobody now could develop. But this does not hurt their cause, for I suppose none of them will deny the authority of Moses and Matthew to be something better than that of Sanconiathon or Livy.

On the other hand, it is against nature that men should knowingly embrace or needlessly propagate error: they may frequently be led into it by delusion, or mislead others for designs of their own, but without some good ground of suspicion that these causes interfered, our rule remains valid. Therefore whatever is generally received, or sedulously inculcated by teachers of whom we have a good opinion, or strongly believed by the party himself upon former conviction of his understanding, though the motives be now forgotten, carries a just presumption of its being true, and any thing offered in contradiction has its improbability too, for which he may as reasonably demand of the freethinker a good evidence sufficient to overcome the improbability, as the latter may demand of him a good evidence sufficient to overcome the

the improbability of supernatural operation; and the evidences ought to be encreased in proportion to the degrees of improbability.

11. This improbability of things happening out of the natural way, deserves the authority of a general rule, which if admitting of exceptions, yet is not invalidated thereby: but still ought to take place in every instance where there is not particular cogent evidence of an excepted case. Some people are so fond of miracle, they would give every thing that construction: if once persuaded that a person has worked them, they will scarce allow him to do any thing like other men. When the Jews took up stones to cast at Jesus, we are told he withdrew himself out of their sight; this the commentators will have to have been done miraculously; but surely any common man, having a troop of his friends behind him might slip away among them without a supernatural power. For my part, I think a backwardness to miracle more commendable, nor would I choose to construe any thing such, until I had tried all possible ways to account for it by natural causes.

A propensity to the miraculous draws on many pernicious and fatal consequences: it leads in the high road to enthusiasm, spiritual pride, censoriousness, and despondency upon finding

finding the usual flood of illumination fall short; for indigestion, failing of spirits, and bodily infirmity, must not be natural: it gives narrow, unworthy notions of the Deity, debasing his Majesty, corrupting his Purity, and vitiating his Holiness, making him subject to unaccountable sudden turns of humour like men, soothed with adoration and prone to take offence at trifles: it entirely takes away the use of reason, for there is no reasoning but only fancying upon the divine counsels: and prevents that investigation of natural causes which might conduct to the soundest and manliest conception of his providence, and best grounded admiration of his wisdom in bringing his purposes to bear by a long-complicated succession of variously-working second causes. Then if spread among the vulgar, it drives them headlong into superstition of all idle terrifying kinds, dreams, prognostics, judgments, fatalities, conjurations, signs, visions, apparitions, and such like: so that they may be said scarce to be conversant among mankind, but to live in a fairy world inhabited by phantoms, spectres, and hobgoblings.

Upon contemplatation of these evils we may find excuse for the freethinker: for if, as may be concluded from the near resemblance of features between him and the bigot observed

served in CHAP. VIII. he be of so unhappy a temperament as that he must run into extremes, having none other option than either to believe nothing or believe any thing, it were difficult to say which of the two were the prudenter choice. And he seems sensible of his infirmity, as one may guess by his drawing the ridicule wherewith he continually pelts religion from the topics of vulgar superstition: as if he were conscious, that with his clumsy fingers he could not take Religion without taking, too, all the cobwebs and trumpery that have clung about it in some dirty corner of the nursery.

12. I have remarked just now two opposite improbabilities to be weighed against one another, that of any thing being put out of its natural course, and that of sober wise men giving credit to such events without sufficient foundation: besides which there are many circumstances attendant upon these two, deserving a place in the scale, among which we may reckon the nature and tendencies of the event. If a man of honest, judicious character but a little straitened in present cash, should receive a strong impression in a dream, that his deceased friend had bid him look under a particular bush standing near the path he intended to go along the next day, where he should find a purse of money: though

though he had no faith in dreams, it is very likely he might have the curiosity to poke about a little under the bush. If the direction had been to lay five guineas there, which on his returning again the day after he should find grown to a hundred, he would hardly care to run the risk: yet upon the advice being repeated four or five successive nights with pressing entreaties and expostulations, he might be tempted to try the experiment. But if he were commanded to break open a neighbour's house for the money with an assurance of the deed being lawful and safe, I imagine he would require a better warrant than twenty dreams, before he would proceed to execution. In like manner if other persons had told him of having had such dreams, and found them accomplished in all points upon following their directions, he would want different degrees of evidence to convince him of their relations respectively being true.

Therefore where the facts reported are frivolous, unbecoming, or repugnant to our ideas of justice and mercy, they carry a higher degree of improbability upon that account: for though we have not so perfect knowledge of what is agreeable to wisdom and goodness as to render every thing appearing foolishness and evil incredible, yet

we

we must and ought to give their due weight to the judgments of our understanding, that salutary guide given us from God for our general direction. Where the facts are indifferent and innocent, less urgent proofs will do. Where they appear important, conducive to some gracious purpose, well suiting with the dignity and character of the performer, a single witness of good repute, deposing upon his own knowledge, might suffice to gather our credit.

For this reason I apprehend it very material to take the internal evidence of a Religion into account in judging of the external: for where a system of doctrine esteemed highly beneficial to mankind, as tending to work an advantageous change in their sentiments and manners, is suggested to have been introduced by a series of supernatural interpositions, their improbability almost vanishes before hearing the particular testimonies alleged in support of them. And one may observe, that the external evidences, by the accounts transmitted of them, seem to have been purposely given in such measure as to weigh down the balance, or not, according to the degree of improbability remaining in the opposite scale. Therefore they do not suffice for Religion in her depravations, which cannot

cannot stand their ground with their pretences to fresh supernatural testimonies.

So the Papists still have miracles among them: and whoever will drudge through the journals of our Methodists, cannot help seeing they endeavour to persuade the world of Miraculous Providences; and a divine interposition perpetually accompanying them, as well in their spiritual as common transactions: so you must needs venerate them as Apostles, not for the sacredness of their doctrine, but because the hand of God manifests itself so signally in their favour. But in proportion to the purity and genuineness of a Religion taught, it stands in less need of additional testimonies to cast the balance on its side. Therefore it is a circumstance in favour of our divines, that they make no pretences to supernatural illuminations nor wonder-working powers, but undertake to maintain their cause by the old ones remaining upon record. Nobody can well doubt the power of God to have given more striking evidences than he has done: and we may regard it as an instance of his wisdom, that he has given them in such just proportion as to take effect where they ought, and to fail where it is best they should fail, that is, according as the Religion understood to be attested by them, is, or is not, beneficial.

But

But we must take with us, that the essence of Religion lies in the sentiments of the mind and dispositions of the heart, not in any form of words or articles of belief which may raise very various and opposite apprehensions in different persons. Now if we examine what idea the freethinker entertains of our established Religion, we shall find it a bundle of superstitions, absurdities, tyranny, and priestcraft, carrying such an improbability of being the work of God, as perhaps no reasonable man would think overcome by the evidences alleged: therefore it is a mercy to the unbeliever, that these evidences are not more glaring, because they might mislead him into a Religion he is much better without, than if he received it in that disfigured state whereinto it has been cast by his misapprehension.

13. Then the other improbability, of relations being made or defended and gaining ground without sufficient evidence, may likewise receive abatement by the circumstances found to attend it. Interest may engage men to impose upon others, and the desire of ingratiating with the powerful or the populace, raise defenders to an opinion they do not believe. Good policy will sometimes suggest inventions to keep an ignorant people in order, who could not be brought to see the

benefit of regularity and concord: and the reputation of an able disputant urges some to maintain a point without ever considering it calmly. Notions early imbibed, and never called in question among the company usually conversed with, or having a connection with the profession engaged in, will often give a secret bias to the honestest minds to support what they esteemed the common cause. A fondness for the miraculous, interwoven in many constitutions, has a surprising efficacy upon the imagination, changing the nature of things, and making their very improbability a motive for believing them. I have myself heard stories of apparitions, deaths foreboded by the party being seen in two places at once, and the like, upon testimony that would have convinced me of any common fact without leaving the least shadow of doubt, and this by persons who I was satisfied had no artifice nor intention to deceive me. And when this happens to be the national humour, one may expect it should run far greater lengths than we can have experienced in this country of reason and ridicule, which for once may very properly join in alliance against such an enemy.

But where such propensity is seconded by religious zeal, it is easy to imagine what wonders they may work by their united force,

force, perverting the senses to give false evidence, falsifying the records of the memory, making men undesignedly add circumstances that never happened to a real transaction, pick up stories from any body upon the slightest foundation, and report them again confidently as of their own knowledge. For every miracle full evidenced would be an incontestible proof of the being and dominion of a God, therefore all remissness in believing or defending it, is looked upon as the sin of Atheism: which produces a positiveness and eagerness of assertion that nothing can compare with, except party zeal. Now whoever would go through a full and fair examination of supernatural history, ought to take all these things into consideration, and give them each their just and proper weight in determining his judgment.

14. It is not my business to apply any of these circumstances, nor to poize their respective weights in particular cases, for this belongs rather to ecclesiastical history and knowledge of the world, than to philosophy: it would be carrying the shoe-maker beyond his last, and encroaching upon the province of divines. They may please to consider, it is service enough for one private man to have acted as pioneer, endeavouring to level that intrenchment of absolute incredibility where-

with the enemy used to keep them at a distance, so that they may come directly to a general action: and to have reminded them of the several quarters in the adverse camp, that they may take care to make the action general, and not in the hurry of pursuit leave vacant spaces unoccupied, where the enemy rallying from time to time may renew the fight unexpectedly.

For I would wish to have the faith of mankind compact and solid throughout: sound not only in the articles believed, but in the foundations for believing. It is not unprecedented for men to build a real truth on hollow ground, in which case their faith is rather good fortune than good conduct, and will be apt to shake and totter grievously in the storms of opposition, or batteries of ridicule. If I have any title to meddle with the merits of the cause, it must be in that part respecting the internal evidence, which we observed before has a just and strong weight in the determination, and probably does actually cast the balance with most persons: but Religion, as has been already remarked, does not consist so much in a set of articles, as in the sense impressed by them upon the mind: so that the same outward form of profession may contain very different Religions, some frivolous, absurd, and wicked, others noble,

noble, rational, and holy, according as diversly understood or apprehended in the mind of the hearer. Therefore what I am next going upon may be of some moment towards determing the judgment, which is to attempt explaining some of the orthodox tenets by the theory I have endeavoured to sketch out in this work upon the principles of human reason, aiming to find out such a sense of them, without violence or wresting, as may coincide or prove reconcileable therewith. By which whoever happens to come into my explanations will see what degree of improbability still remains for the divine to overcome by skilful management of his weapons of external evidence.

15. Before I quit this subject, it may not be amiss to bestow a little consideration upon the design of miracles, so far as discoverable to our apprehension. The interposition of Omnipotence in the formation of a world, and the daily creation of Souls for children, were made essential parts in the original constitution of universal nature, without which the rest of the divine plan would have remained imperfect, nor could have taken effect. For without the former, neither this Earth we inhabit, nor the productions formed therein could have had a being, and without the latter the race of men could not be preserved upon

upon earth: so that those may be ranked among the principal lines of the plan necessary to support and sustain one another. But these, how much soever esteemed the immediate work of God, are not vulgarly styled miracles: for if a hundred young fellows and a hundred girls of vigorous constitutions intermarry, it would be thought more a miracle if they did not produce a living child among them at the twelvemonth's end, than that they should produce many: what are commonly understood as miracles can scarcely be thought necessary to carry on the courses of nature, or supply any defects in the provisions made for them. We cannot well imagine a rod changed into a serpent, because there were not serpents enow generated in the natural way, nor water turned into wine to prevent interruption in the innocent jollities of a wedding: such motives must appear of too little importance and dignity to give motion to the arm of Omnipotence.

Therefore we suppose none other intention of miracles than to work upon the minds of men: they were anciently called signs and wonders, their very name by its Latin derivation implies a thing to be wondered at, as the Greek term Thauma does a thing to be stared at, and they are frequently declared to have been performed for manifesting the

power

power of God. We may know likewise upon the authority of Saint Paul, if not by our own understanding, that the contemplation of visible nature would lead to the knowledge of God, if duly attended to, but men in general were so immersed among sensible objects, and the pursuit of their pleasures and private interests, that they could never rise to a competent degree of that knowledge; so we may conclude the principal design of miracles was to supply the defect of clearness in their understandings. There may be another use of them for giving credence to express messengers sent upon some particular errand, but this relates only occasionally to the persons who were to receive the message: so the general purpose of them remains none other than to impress a sense of the being, the power, and dominion of God upon the hearts of mankind.

Therefore miracles were most plentifully employed in the earliest and ignorant ages, and have gradually decreased as men improved in observation and knowledge. The Angels conversed familiarly upon earth no longer than the patriarchal times, but afterwards appeared very rarely, upon solemn and extraordinary occasions: Urim and Thummim scarce held throughout the Jewish monarchy: prophecy ceased upon the coming

of

of Christ, and some doctors hold all other supernatural powers died with the Apostles; at least I may say, without offence in this land of freedom, there has been nothing of miracle, prophecy, or revelation for the last thousand years, but we are left to the records of ancient days, and those subject to many disputations upon their authenticity. From this method of proceeding in the government of the moral world, we may gather that mankind in successive generations stands less and less in need of signs and wonders; and what supernatural operation may still be judged requisite for us is dispensed by the secret imperceptible influences of the Comforter, promised to be our light and director.

But we are not to expect he will operate in a visible, sensible manner, nor to look for him in transports and ecstasies, and sudden flashes of illumination. We are told his office lies in teaching us all things, but ecstasy and transport are not methods of teaching: he conveys instruction to us through the channel of our own understanding, and what lights he vouchsafes to afford seem to us the discoveries of our own understanding. Wherefore it behoves us to make an honest, humble, industrious use of this faculty, upon which we may depend with more assurance than our forfathers, since we have the promise of

so powerful an assistant to make up for its natural infirmities: and perhaps when he shall have finished his work, even the remembrance of former miracles may be innocently and harmlessly dropped. Upon these considerations it must be acknowledged, that our cotemporary divines act prudently in being less copious upon those topics than their predecessors, but applying themselves principally to clear and open that channel by which alone we now receive our spiritual food, reserving their externals for such who could not otherwise be brought to that just and lively sense of the divine dominion and attributes, and habitual dependence upon Providence, which are the grand sources of human happiness both in this world, and that which is to come.

CHAP. XII.

GRACE.

ALTHOUGH our Church acknowledges miracles to be ceased, nevertheless, I take it to be one of her principal doctrines, that the Spirit of God, or more properly God the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, does still operate upon men, enabling them to discern truths and exert a vigour of mind in the performance of good works they could not have done by their natural powers. Nor is this a contradiction to the cessation of miracles any more than the doctrine of creating souls for children, because such assistance is necessary to work out our salvation: but we have seen before, that miracle is understood of signs and wonders whose principal use is none other than to strike upon the senses; whereas this supernatural operation is of indispensable use, performed upon that account and not as an evidence of any thing else, but itself requires other evidence to prove its reality.

I have nothing to do with the proofs of there being such a divine interposition; those I suppose must be drawn from the sacred Scriptures, and left to the management of divines: no more belongs to me than to examine what we are to understand when we hear them talk of the grace of God, and tell us that no good thing can be done effectually without it: for it would be too hasty to reject, and of little service to adopt, what they say, until we have gotten a competent knowledge of the matter alleged. Now to gain a clearer conception, and avoid the perplexities consequent upon taking a subject too

too much in the gross, let us consider separately the effect produced in the mind at seasons of grace, and what causes may be supposed to produce that effect. But these, too, merit a distinct enquiry, yet are commonly blended together under the same term: for we speak of a man having grace, which must denote the state of his understanding and temper of his mind, or the degree of activity exerted, and of this being owing to the grace of God, which must refer to the act of the donor.

2. Nobody can miss observing what varieties there are in the clearness of his faculties and vigour of his spirits fitting him for any common business, profession, science, or enterprize he can undertake, more at one time than another. Sometimes he finds himself tasteless, inactive, and dull, he strives and toils without making any progress, all is task, and bungle and blunder, nor can he do his work to satisfy himself: another, while he sees every thing at a glance, his scenes appear full, his objects distinct and lively, he proceeds with ease and dexterity, his labour becomes an entertainment, he feels himself carried along by an impulse almost whether he will or no. All this in times of ignorance and darkness was described to the heavenly powers: Apollo, or Hercules, or Mercury

Mercury were invoked upon every important occasion to lend their present aid according to the nature of the enterprize to be gone up.

And we still figuratively, though not superstitiously, speak of inspirations almost as currently as the Ancients: the hero is inspired with ardor in battle, the politician with schemes of public utility, the orator with eloquence, and the poet with enthusiasm; nor do we want to be taught the expedience of Horace's precept; Thou shalt do and say nothing against the good will of Minerva.

This particular aptitude for the work in hand we may reckon the genus, whereof grace, considered as an effect, is the species. We may sometimes find our understandings clear to discern the subjects of divinity, to look forward into futurity, perceiving things there with the lively co[illegible] of present objects having an unconfu[illegible]gh incompleat conception of Goodnes[illegible] Equity, of universal Providence, rejoicing in its protection, satisfied with its proceedings, earnest to perform laudable actions, going through our duties with taste and pleasure: these I take to be the seasons of grace. Then again we become cold and heavy, or dragged along forcibly by appetite and worldly pursuits, immersed in temporal engagements, scarce

able

able to raise a thought of any thing superior to natural causes, backward to practise what we know, tempted to murmur, to despond, to doubt of the divine goodness, or think it of little avail to ourselves: whenever this happens, we may look upon grace as withdrawn.

Thus the reality of the fact is certain beyond all denial: continual experience testifies that there are such variations as above mentioned in the state of our understanding and alertness of our activity, which if any body shall choose to express by some other term than grace, this makes no alteration in the case; for names cannot alter the nature of things, but they will be still the same whatever denomination you rank them under. Therefore the effects meant by those who employ the word grace, and its efficacy, cannot be controverted; nor that we shall proceed to very little purpose in any exercises of Religion or morality, when we have it not in some measure upon us; so it remains to enquire what are the causes to which this effect may be owing.

We shall find nothing in experience or human reason to hinder, but that it may spring from the same sources with the other effects of similar kind taken notice of above; for we have the same lucid seasons of comprehension, and energy of action come upon us

to

to carry us through the functions of our profession, our investigations of science, and even our amusements: the enthusiasm of the poet differs nothing from the pious ardor of the saint in essence and quality, though it does greatly in value and importance. Yet those are never now ascribed to divine interposition, but deemed to proceed from the present state of the brain, condition of the bodily humours, external encouragements, converse with persons of similar turn, sight of inviting examples, or other natural causes. Nevertheless, the greater importance of religious inspiration above all others makes a very considerable difference, and justifies us in ascribing it, though remotely, through a long chain of second causes, to the act and purpose of God as a providential event. For we have seen in CHAP. VI. that although all things fall out by the divine provision, yet those only wherein we can find some apparent benefit and visible mark of goodness are to be esteemed providential, and more so according to the greatness of the benefit discerned. Therefore we may deservedly give this inspiration the name of Grace, as a signal and inestimable favour to the receiver, the word being derived from a Latin term signifying Favour.

3. But though our almighty Governor wants

wants neither power nor skill to compleat all his purposes, and effectually confer all his favours, by the wise disposition of second causes on their first establishment, so as that both the natural and moral world may run on its destined course in every minute particular, without needing the further touch of his hand, yet on the other hand we have seen in the Chapter on Providence, there is nothing inconsistent with our ideas of the Attributes in supposing him purposely to have left room in the plan for his own interpositions at such times as he judged proper: whence the effusion of grace by supernatural operation, carries no greater weight of improbability to be drawn up by positive evidence in the opposite scale, than what hangs to every fact whereof experience and reason can give us no assurance. So the field lies open to divines to produce what proofs they have in store in support of their allegation as of a credible point to which reason has no repugnance.

We may remember further as was remarked in the same Chapter, it is reasonable to think that God has adapted his courses of Providence to the condition and occasions of his intelligent creatures, making the natural, the moral, and the supernatural systems, harmonize and mutually correspond with one another:

ther: therefore the generality of mankind being so circumstanced as that the thought of his dominion and superintending Providence might be lost without an opinion of his being present and directly operating among them, affords a degree of probability that he does so operate.

If the divines think this argument of any weight, they are heartily welcome to it: the point it tends to confirm being of so great consequence, that a prudent man would be glad to give any helps which may be of service. What though he can himself apprehend the moral world administered by a long complicated tissue of natural causes, reaching from the first establishment of nature, he must be sensible that many cannot follow him in his thought: but it is of the utmost moment that they should have a lively sense of a Providence presiding over their thoughts and actions, especially those relating to their spiritual concerns. Therefore the grand important point to inculcate is this, that grace comes from God, the manner how it comes is rather matter of speculation, unless so far as necessary to satisfy of the other: then let every man believe it to come in such manner as he can comprehend, lest if you disturb him in this circumstance, he should not believe it to come from God at all.

4. Yet

4. Yet as the best things corrupted become the worst, and the most salutary opinion may, by a little perversion or extravagance, turn into a poisonous notion, therefore it is of most dangerous tendency for a man to persuade himself he perceives the divine interposition actually operating upon him. There are those who fancy themselves too cunning for the Spirit of God; he means to give his influences secretly, but they can find him out; they can see the flashes of illumination and feel the floods of inspiration poured upon them immediately from the divine hand, they can give an exact history of all his motions from the very day and hour when he first touched their hearts, converting them from obdurate sinners into the children of heaven. It were scarce credible, had we not examples among our contemporaries, to what wild lengths of superstition and enthusiasm these fancies will carry men: debasing the Majesty of God, creating spiritual pride, and a superlative contempt of their fellow-creatures.

For though we know God is omnipresent, alike powerful every where, and wants not largeness of intelligence to act in any one particular place without disregarding all others, yet this is by much too vast an idea for our comprehension: if we conceive him

familiarly present and immediately operating upon ourselves, we shall unavoidably fall into an apprehension of his being absent or regardless elsewhere, and insensibly nourish a conceit of being peculiar favourites, but all others in a manner outlawed from his providence, to be regarded as aliens rather than compatriots. But there are degrees of extravagance, and I am apt to suspect that many pious Christians, especially of the female sex, though not running those lengths, yet do a little surpass the bounds of moderation: therefore they can never be too much upon their guard against the notion of perceiving the immediate operations of the holy Ghost, whereinto they are unwarily drawn by a common figure of speech, the Metonyme, of taking a cause for the effect.

In extraordinary events affecting the state of kingdoms, or Religion, or private families, or particular persons, we may be said with propriety to see the Finger of Heaven, because the natural causes which brought them about received their disposition from the touch of that finger. We are very properly said to receive our daily bread from the Hand of Heaven, because the fertility of soils and industry of man, supplying plenty of bread to be found in every baker's shop, derived originally from that hand. So with the same

propriety

propriety we may speak of feeling the grace of God in our understandings and hearts, because our Church instructs us to ascribe it to his interposing among second causes, yet without idea of an immediate operation at the instant time of feeling; for I apprehend the orthodox doctrine of grace carries no such sense.

We are taught upon a higher authority that the wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit:——that is, if I may be admitted to offer an interpretation, in the pangs of a spiritual birth the patient sensibly feels the effects, but knows nothing of when, or in what part the touch was given. Or if I may presume to illustrate further, I would compare the effusion of grace to a plentiful shower in a dry summer: if you go out immediately you will see the turfs still russet, the leaves hanging lank, and the fruits wrinkled; but look again a day or two after, and every thing appears lively, vigorous, and flourishing. Therefore, if a man, after long confinement to his bed by sickness, should, upon looking out at window, discover an unusual verdure, he may conclude that it has rained, not that it actually does rain: so if, after a season of thoughtlessness, you perceive

your understanding on a sudden lively to discern, and your will vigorous to pursue heavenly things, you may orthodoxly conclude there has been an effusion, not that there is one now.

One way of grace coming is, we are told, by hearing; but when you are touched with a sermon, the influence is transmitted to you through the natural channel of human eloquence: so the effusion was never poured upon you at all, but upon the preacher some time before he composed the discourse, which it may be was done a year ago. Well, but you have heard the same sermon before without being affected by it in like manner, so the difference must be owing to some alteration in yourself: this I can easily believe, for I have myself read treatises of divinity, of metaphysics, of mathematics, orations, histories, tales, Homer, Virgil, and Milton, with very different degrees of emolument, taste, and emotion. But if we are instructed to believe the particular affectingness of a religious discourse proceeds from the workings of the spirit, why must the operation exciting those workings be instantaneous and immediate? The spirit is the same God with him who established the courses of nature, and accomplishes distant purposes surely by their mechanical motions: has he then in his per-

son

son of the spirit so little command over second causes that he cannot prepare them in a manner to excite grace in the heart long after his operation ceases, but to have the work well done, must do it himself? Since then we cannot pretend to limit the power nor wisdom of the Spirit, and have found such mischief spring from an opinion of his immediate operations being discernible by the senses, it were much safer to entertain no such opinion.

5. The thought of a present Deity working upon us is an intoxicating thought; how much soever it may sooth the young beginner at first, the indulgenee of it is extremely dangerous: it is like a fatigued, thirsty man putting his mouth to the brandy bottle, he may design only a moderate cordial, but can never be sure how much more than is good for him will not slip down his throat. Therefore as I did before in the Chapter on Providence, I shall now again recommend to every man to remove the finger of God from him, as far as he can without letting it go beyond the reach of his comprehension: if he believes the grace in his heart owing to a supernatural interposition of the Spirit, still he may place a line of second causes between the act of God and the effect he feels. By practice in any science or way of performance

ance we strengthen our faculties, so as clearer to discern and readier to execute new matters of similar kind after a considerable intermission; and expertness, though gradually acquired, commonly shows itself compleat at some particular time: nor is it inconceivable that the divine interposition may work a like alteration in the faculties, giving them a clearness and vigour not to be attained by natural means, but to lie dormant until the occasion offers for using them. Therefore if any man must frame some particular imagination concerning the manner of the Spirit's working, which yet he might more prudently forbear, let him suppose it done by acting upon his organs in his sleep, or at some former time when he did not perceive it.

Those who have gone through a grammar school must remember that sometimes, on the evening before a repetition day, they have striven and toiled for several hours to get their task by heart, but to no purpose, being unable at bed-time to repeat a single sentence right; nevertheless awaking in the morning they have often found it ready at their tongue's end, so that they could go through the whole currently without mistake or hesitation. Now I do not offer this as an instance of supernatural grace, for it would be almost

blasphemy

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to believe him employed in so trifling a service as to help a school-boy in saying his lesson: I only mention it in order to introduce another case which may be thought worthy his assistance. Suppose then I had an intimate friend whom I greatly loved and esteemed, but who hand fallen into some gross and fatal error on the fundamentals of Religion.. After many unsuccessful attempts to reclaim him, I wish to introduce an able divine, whom I know to be a man of sound knowledge and judgment, better skilled in managing those points than myself: but my friend has taken an utter distaste to all parsons, and will not hear of one of them being brought to talk with him. What then have I else to do but wait upon the doctor, in order to gather such information from him as I may employ afterwards myself in the best manner I am able? Accordingly I obtain a conference, and receive such a scheme of argumentation as I think cannot fail of taking effect, if I could but convey it unbroken: but it is long, consisting of many particulars, and intricate; so as to make it difficult to be retained in mind without losing any of that clearness of explanation and closeness of deduction wherein its efficacy must consist. On coming home I endeavour to recollect what I had heard, and

fix

fix every thing upon my memory in the proper order and colours wherewith it had been delivered, but after many hours toil and labour, find I can make out nothing regular or satisfactory; so am forced, like the school-boy, to go to bed in desperation of doing any good: nevertheless, in the morning I have the whole occurring to my thoughts spontaneously, in the full vigour and precision I could wish, and applying it immeeiately to my unhappy friend, thereby cure him effectually of his error.

Now if I am persuaded upon the authority of the Church, that the divine assistance must have been afforded to make me instrumental in the saving of a soul, when am I to believe the help was given? Surely not when I felts its effects in the morning, for there is no difficulty in reading the tracess of one's memory when clear and vivid: this I can do by my own strength without supernatural aid: it is no more than repeating the Lord's prayer, or any thing else one is familiarly acquainted with. Is it not more rational to suppose the Spirit aiding the preceding day, while I took so much pains in a good work, without perceiving any progress made therein? but he knew, though I did not, that the pains then taking would, by his co-operating influence, cast my mental organs into such a state

state, as that by their mechanical workings in my sleep they should range themselves exactly in the order wanted, which they have a quality in doing, as has been remarked before in CHAP. X. §. 4. of the First Volume.

6. For I take it likewise to be orthodox that the Spirit does nothing for us by himself, but only co-operates with our endeavours: we must try, or no effect will ensue; so the effect must appear to be produced by our own powers, and so indeed it always is, but with the secret influence supplying their insufficiency of strength. This excludes all spontaneous illuminations which we have done nothing ourselves to procure, and all irresistible grace forcing upon us against our Will. We may consider further, that the Spirit does not act upon our bodily powers, he never invigorates our muscles to give us more than human strength, nor purges our optics to make us see objects in the dark: but confines his aid to helping us in our spiritual concerns by supplying us with grace.

Now though I have hitherto applied the term Grace, considered as an effect to clearness of apprehension and strength to perform good works, in compliance with the current language, and to avoid the obscurity arising from needless abstractions, yet in strictness these

these things are not grace itself, but the fruits of it. For piety and goodness, though best evidenced by good works, do not consist in them: it is the disposition and habit of the mind, properly termed grace, which makes a man good: and this he must have before he can perform good works, though he cannot know it himself without that proof. The grace is a permanent quality abiding with him in his sleep, at his meals, his diversions, at other times, when he has no opportunity of exercising it, and prior to the pious thoughts and actions which first warrant us to pronounce it subsisting. But this grace was the effect of his former endeavours to attain it, assisted by the Spirit co-operating with him at the time of exerting them: which endeavours must be repeated to acquire a habit, and so frequently prove ineffectual that he can never know they have succeeded, and consequently can never know the Spirit has co-operated, until, upon subsequent trial, he discovers their effects after the operation has ceased.

Hence it appears from the nature of the thing, that the notion of discerning an immediate effusion of the Spirit, or feeling the finger of God move upon our hearts, has no manner of foundation: for the impulses of grace are nothing else than the spontaneous workings

workings of a habit, or vigorous state of our faculties, acquired by our own well-applied industry; nor have we evidence of any thing co-operating with that industry, either from experience or elsewhere, unless what can be drawn from the written oracles and arguments urged upon them. After full conviction worked upon a man this way, that no good thing, efficacious to secure his spiritual interests, can be thought or done without supernatural assistance, then indeed he may have experimental knowledge of the Spirit's co-operating, and feel the power of God upon his heart: because he may experience effects which he is already persuaded could not have been produced by his natural powers, without an additional strength thrown into them by divine interposition.

7. Those among us who pretend to extraordinary illuminations and supernatural powers, may be perceived extremely willing to have them taken for divine testimonies to their doctrines and practices: but they do not reflect, as indeed they seldom do any thing with reflection, that herein they change their very nature, bringing them to rank under the class of signs and wonders, that is, direct miracles, worked not so much for their immediate uses, as for manifestation of the divine power to such as could not be made sensible of it any other

other way: whereas the assistance of the Comforter was promised for the necessary uses of the receiver, nor can serve as a manifestation, because not credited by the bystander unless convinced before, of the power of God working this way, upon Scripture authority. The same authority indeed testifies that the Spirit did operate miraculously upon the Apostles at the feast of Penticost and upon several other occasions: but this was for the introduction of a new Religion, since when, say our doctors, such operations have totally ceased.

When were miracles ever employed for removing the corruptions of Religion since it has been an old one? Are our modern innovations of greater importance than the Reformation? Yet that work of God went on without signs and wonders, and still continues going on, if we may gather from the very recent disbandment of that body-guard of Popery the Jesuits. Our first reformers claimed no miraculous illuminations nor extraordinary powers, but could execute what work God in his wisdom judged needful for them to do, with the ordinary assistance of the Comforter afforded to every pious Christian seeking it honestly, diligently, and humbly, not saying arrogantly within himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as this publican.

However,

However, since it is in vain to reason with people who make a merit of despising reason, but they will continue obstinate in holding the revival of miracles, I would wish them to be very careful in distinguishing the genuine from the spurious; for they may remember that, when God works his miracles, he permits other powers at the same time, not commissioned from him, to work theirs. When Moses turned his rod into a serpent, the Egyptian magicians turned theirs into serpents likewise: while oracles were delivered forth from before the ark, the witch of Endor called up Samuel from the grave by necromancy: while Micaiah declared the Word of the Lord, Satin knew whom to inspire for Ahab to go up to battle against the Syrians: while Jesus healed all manner of diseases the devils could troop by legions into the body of a demoniac, and being driven from thence impel the swine by thousands to run violently down a precipice into the sea. Therefore, those who believe miraculous illuminations renewed among them, have reason to expect that delusions will be intruded in their company: they know very well who can upon occasion transform himself into an angel of light, so that the apparent operations of the holy Spirit may be counterfeit; for it is not unlikely that some Devil of perverseness or vanity

vanity may work such wonders, as will if possible deceive even the elect. They ought not then to be over hasty and confident of their inward feelings, but take Saint Paul's advice to try every spirit before they trust him; and study calmly the doctrine of touches, that they may not be imposed upon to mistake the cloven foot, for the finger of God.

8. We may observe likewise, that there are means of grace, and ways of quenching the Spirit, and men are said to grieve the holy Spirit: by these expressions some people are led inconsiderately to fancy themselves of importance with God, as if they could merit his favour, or disappoint him as they pleased. But they must entertain a very unworthy opinion of him, as subject to human passions, to imagine they can stir up either fondness or vexation in him by any thing they do; such imaginations may be indulged to persons of gross apprehension, who can rise no higher than the ideas exhibited by one another, and can think of God no otherwise, than as a very good and powerful man, living somewhere above the clouds: but those who pretend to more light than all the rest of mankind, ought to know that grieving is an exoteric term designed only for the vulgar, to touch their affections with the suggestion of ingratitude

gratitude to their protector and best benefactor.

The other phrases of quenching the spirit, and using the means of grace, must relate to the spirit and grace in us, considered as an effect of some prior cause: for it cannot be conceived that the act of God may be frustrated, or rendered effectual by any thing of our doing. But we are to understand thereby, that any good disposition of mind or vigour of resolution we possess, here called grace and spirit, may be weakened or destroyed by our ill-conduct or neglect: and were acquired by means of our own using, with the divine assistance co-operating, not acting as a distinct agent, but adding energy to the powers we exert. Therefore it behoves us to study carefully what are the means of grace, and practise them sedulously, and we shall find they are such as have a natural tendency to procure the temper of mind we desire; for the Spirit of God does no more than assist nature where she falls deficient, it never counteracts nor controls her.

So then our business is to examine our nature, our wants, and our powers, using our best reason for applying the one to the other: the same measures of conduct will be expedient as if there were no supernatural interposition; the only, though very material difference

ference this makes is in the success, not the choice, nor the prudence of our proceedings. Only we must take care to inform our reason by what lights we can gather from any quarter, still employing our judgment in choosing our guides, interpreting their directions, and applying them to particular occasions; and if we manage well and honestly in all these points, we may rest assured both from reason and promise, that should any further assistance be necessary, God will graciously afford it us in as ample a manner as he sees requisite.

CHAP. XIII.

TRINITY.

WE come now to the most mysterious article of the Christian faith, the hardest of digestion to the reasoner, esteemed most sacred by the orthodox, and acknowledged incomprehensible by both: which we are taught to regard as the grand fundamental of our Religion, to be received upon the Word of God with a reverential awe and submission, not to be curiously pried into.

I have

I have sometimes, in entering upon knotty enquiries, introduced them with an invocating prelude, to render the spirits more alert by entertainment, and draw attention to drier matters behind. But this is not a subject to be trifled with, nor disfigured by rhetorical flourishes. The spirit of solid reason, and the spirit of grace, will not be conjured down from above by invocations: they are to be obtained none otherwise than by application of the natural means for procuring them; trusting for the success to the Disposer of all events, who best knows what human undertakings require assistance, or are of importance enough to receive it.

Those natural means I take to be an honest industry, a sincere desire of doing service, an unaffected humility, a becoming courage tempered with more than filial reverence, but clear of slavish fears, which would render all our powers useless. He that wrapped up his talent in a napkin, did it because he was afraid: but the delivery of the talent is our proper call to the work that may be performed with it, for we have no ground to expect an extraordinary call manifested to our senses upon any occasion. Then let every man carefully survey the talents entrusted with him, as likewise in what service there appears a probability of succeeding,

ceeding, be it to ever so small a degree: and this is the task he is called upon to finish.

Men in general have strongly taken part on the side of orthodoxy or against it, they never enter upon a controverted point without a pre-contracted zeal either to maintain or overthrow it: this I have always industriously avoided, having never engaged in disputes, and I hope given evidence of a neutrality or rather friendliness to both parties in the former course of these enquiries. I have no temporal interests to serve, no honours to expect, no vanity to gratify by fighting on either side: it is nothing to me whether the world be Christian or philosophic, further than as either may be really more conducive to present and future happiness: I have already shown some practice in abstruse and knotty disquisitions, and some exercise in the methods of explanation and illustration; both which we seldom see the same person endeavoured to unite, those who think the deepest taking little care to express themselves clearest. Upon this survey of my small stock, I seem to myself not totally unqualified for my present enterprize, wherein if I can proceed with the natural means above mentioned, I need not stand in terror of that power whose displeasure is most to be dreaded, notwithstanding the sacredness of the subject.

ject. For I am sure of finding, not only righteous judgment but mercy with him, and though I fail in the honest attempt, he will not be extreme to mark what is amiss, but accept the will for the deed.

Before the judgment seat of men, who are ever forward to judge another's servant without considering that to his own master he standeth or falleth, I have less expectation of an acquittal: the man of zealous piety regards all examination of religious mysteries as a profanation, as a touching the ark of God with unhallowed hands; the man of reason looks upon every mention of them, otherwise than in the light of an exploded absurdity or unintelligible jargon, as a certain mark of weakness in the intellects unable to throw off the impressions of the nurse and the school-master. I have more respect for my fellow-creatures than will suffer me to remain indifferent of their estimation, or not to wish for their favourable opinion; yet can bear the thought of hazarding their censure in prosecution of what to me carries the appearance of a duty. So shall go on my own way without trepidation, careful to offer nothing shocking either to Religion or reason, desirous, not uneasily anxious, to stand approved in the eyes of others for the allowa-

bleness of my attempt, whatever they may judge of the success.

But that they may not expect more than I have in my intention, I must remind them that, as in the articles hitherto touched upon, so in handling this, I shall not enter into the evidences of its truth and reality; for I do not apprehend it discoverable, or capable of being proved by the light of nature, nor does it become me to decide upon the interpretation of texts alleged in support of it: I am only to seek for a rational construction of the doctrine taught as orthodox in the Church, so as to leave it a thing credible, but not to be credited without some more positive proof than that of reason having no repugnance against it. Such credibility surely cannot hurt the cause, for I presume there is nobody now willing to cry out with Tertullian and Beveridge, I believe because it is impossible: so this argument drawn from the impossibility may very well be spared without detriment to my compatriots, who seem rather a little too inclined to make their want of comprehension an irrefragable evidence against the truth of a fact.

But there are mysteries in visible nature, in the impulses causing gravitation and cohesion, in the vital circulations, in voluntary action

action carried on by instruments which we perceive not what they be, nor where they lie, nor with what limbs they connect: therefore there may well be mysteries in the divine nature. Nevertheless, I am for leaving as little mysterious as possible, and though I must not expect to comprehend every thing it may be proper for me to admit, yet it seems rather commendable to comprehend as much as I can.

2. There is no occasion to take pains in setting out the doctrine, we may refer to the three creeds appointed to be read in our Churches: the grand objection commonly made to them is, that they impose upon us the belief of three being one, which is contrary to the clearest principles of our reason. For numbers are the most distinct and steady of all our ideas; we know that a million and one is more than a million, nor find ourselves liable to mistake the one number for the other: but our knowledge of all other things so nearly proportioned to one another is inaccurate and fluctuating, unless where we can express them by numbers. Therefore if we may not trust our understanding in discerning the difference between one and three, it must lose all credit with us whatever, nor can we trust it to judge upon the arguments brought in support of this very

very article: for I am not more sure that I read the creeds in my common-prayer book, nor that I know what they enjoin me to believe, than that one number is not another.

Now I shall not undertake to defend the point objected against, but must give it up as directly contrary to reason: the only question is, whether it is to be found in our creeds. Our divines, I dare answer, will none of them say that number three is number one: Athanasius affirms no such thing, for he tells us expressly that one God is not three Gods, nor are three Persons one Person, and pronounces it a damnable heresy to believe either. But this, say the objectors mends the matter very little, for if there be three Persons each of whom is God, there must be three Gods, for you will not pretend them to be component parts making up a God among them: on the other hand if there be only one God, there can be but one Person who is God. So the difference is only in words, and the position, we are enjoined under such terrible threatnings to believe, remains the same in substance as that number three is number one: but it is impossible for us to believe contradictions, therefore inconsistent to admit any argument in proof of them, whether from authority or otherwise.

As to the impossibility of believing contradictions,

dictions, I much question the fact, and whether it would not puzzle the objectors themselves to shew, either that nobody ever believed the Trinity, or that all who did, have understood it in a sense that carries no contradiction: at least I apprehend, that instances might be produced of men holding contradictory propositions where the opposition was not very glaring, and upon matters whereof their ideas were a little obscure and confused.

Many who think themselves very knowing persons, apprehend bodies to have an attractive or repulsive quality inherent in them: yet what is more contrary to reason than that a body should act in places where it is not, or that action in the abstract should go out from the agent to operate at immense distances, large as that from the Sun to the Earth? It was but the other day a friend of mine was accused of utter ignorance in physiology for maintaining that, upon the parts of a human body joining in vital union, there was not a new substance produced more than was existing before they came together: the corporealist, universally, and I doubt not many orthodox Christians, believe a man to be one individual substance having a personality, not communicable to any other individual, yet that the many substances of his limbs and other parts

are

are this individual; nay more, that after losing a leg or an arm, he still continues the same individual substance he was before. Now what is this, almost universal belief of an individual compound, better than believing that number ten thousand is number one, and if you substract five hundred, the remaining nine thousand five hundred is still the same number one?

If we attentively observe the apprehensions of the vulgar among us, I believe they will be found both Tritheists and Unitarians, though they do not know of their being the former: so are not disturbed by the contradiction, nor driven to the dilemma of either dividing the substance, or confounding the persons. They seem to apprehend the Son on coming down to earth, disunited from the substance of his Father, who remained behind at a distance in heaven: yet during that separation retaining his divinity, and so being a distinct God. They apprehend him and the and the Spirit sometimes possessing the Attributes as of their own nature, sometimes subordinate to the Father, acting by his powers and under his direction; and this they conceive occasionally according to what the other doctrines of Religion in their apprehension require: but as they do not much compare their ideas together, so neither do they

they perceive any discordance among them, such being habituated to occur at times as are most serviceable for their present use. Therefore it is a very prudent and honest caution, to revere the mystery without prying curiously into it, and you do them a real injury by putting them upon comparisons of their ideas, unless their Christianity be a mischief to them, which it might be somewhat difficult to prove: for you must either deprive them of the benefit received from that, or endanger their disbelieving the unity of God, that grand fundamental article both of revealed and natural Religion.

As for the pretence of this article being the foundation of spiritual tyranny, this is not true; for history and experience testify, that those who have erected schemes of tyranny did not find it sufficient for their purpose, but were forced to build upon additions of their own, such as transubstantiation, purgatory, the custody of the keys: our modern seducers of the populace pretend to extraordinary illuminations, peculiar providences, and wonder-working powers: and Mahometism, that religion propagated by the sword, totally rejects the Trinity for this notable reason, because there cannot be a son without a mother as well as father. Perhaps nobody was ever hurt barely by his reception of the creeds, how

erroneously

erroneously soever he may have understood them: it is the stir made about them that does the mischief. Any speculative point, as the individuality of compounds, or super-addition of a new existence upon their conjunction, might raise as great disturbances as the disputes between Athanasius and Arius, if once warmly espoused as a matter of state, or taken up for a party distinction.

3. The scantiness of our understandings and obscurity of our ideas, occasioned principally by the unsteadiness of our language, (for we generally think in words) is such, that every man who will pry narrowly into his own thoughts, may find many contrarieties among them: which he cannot get rid of when discovered, because he cannot always know which to throw aside, each being supported by evidence that its opposition to the other will not warrant him to reject. Nevertheless, one should choose to harbour as few inconsistencies as possible, and there is none so likely way to escape them, where the assurance on both sides is strong, as by examining the terms employed in expressing them, in order to find out such exposition as may render them compatible with one another. Therefore the question now before us depends upon the construction of the expressions employed, and becomes resolved into

this

this other, namely, whether saying that three Persons are one God, is the same as saying that three Persons are one Person, or three Gods one God; that is, whether the words used in the first proposition be equivalent to those standing in the others.

Now I apprehend the unity of the Godhead is clearly enough understood on both sides not to admit of a dispute: so the only difficulty remains upon the word Person, which it is obvious must have such an idea affixed to it, as shall not include the idea of substance, for else we shall never escape the contradiction of making number three to be number one. Personality, I believe, is universally ascribed both by learned and simple to some one individual substance, whether compound or simple it is no matter here. I have endeavoured to shew in former Chapters, that it denotes a particular substance, indivisible, not consisting of parts, nor communicable to any other; for I can never be you, how much soever I may be made like you, nor exist by your substance: so that every intelligent or perceptive substance, whether actually having perception or not, is a person, and every person a substance distinct from all others, and unchangeably that person.

Mr. Locke places personality in consciousness,

ness, which he conceives may be annexed to a system of matter, from whence we may conclude him to conceive that it may pass successively from one system to another; and so indeed it actually must in the several stages of life, the material system, as some believe, changing in us every seven years: but we can hardly suppose him ever to conceive it possible, that several consciousnesses should unite at the same time in any one system or substance. So that upon all these hypotheses the contradiction still stares us in the face, for that three Persons are one substance, comes out to be the same as that number three is number one.

But divines will ask, who gave Mr. Locke or you authority to settle our langugage for us? the term as severally applied by you may be proper enough for your uses; but is it an unprecedented thing for the same words to carry very different senses in different sciences? Then let the shoe-maker keep to his last, and leave the interpretation of scripture doctrines to us, who have made it the business of our lives to understand them. Now I must acknowledge the reprehension just, for words being arbitrary signs may be affixed to any sense for convenience sake, and often take a very different currency in succeding generations

rations from what they had formerly, as perhaps will appear by-and-by to be the case with the word at present in question.

But by the way I must remark, that the words Person, Trinity, and Unity of substance are not scripture terms, but chosen upon human authority as the properest to express the sense of Scripture. I do not object to them upon that account; for their long and general reception in the Church is a sufficient evidence that they do contain the genuine scripture doctrine; so we do not cavil at the style used, we only want to know in what sense the word Person ought to be understood.

I do not remember to have met with any further explanation than that it is not to be taken in the common acceptation wherein we use it in distinguishing one man's person from another, by his having a body and soul, dispositions and features, peculiar to himself. This is enough for the common believer, who being taught that the divine Persons differ in another manner than human persons, thereby escapes contradiction, though not obscurity; which is a much less formidable enemy, as being more familiar among the short-sighted race of men. But those who are used to lay their thoughts together will expect something more explicit than this negative explanation:

if

if they be content to take things upon very good authority without being able to comprehend the manner of their being effected, yet they will claim a right to be informed intelligibly, what it is they are to believe; at least they will be better satisfied if a construction which may be clearly understood, can be given to the word Person, consistent with the orthodox doctrines.

4. The Greek word for Person was Hypostasis, which being used by Plato in speaking of the Deity, induced many of the ancient Christians to adopt his notions into their system, the more readily because their zeal made them desirous of shewing that the Trinity was so rational a doctrine as to have been discovered by the human reason of Plato. Cudworth will not allow him the discoverer, but to have learned it from Pythagoras, and that it had probably been taught before by Orpheus: but when we reflect how apt Plato was to put things into the mouth even of his master Socrates which never were in his head, and how natural it is for each new philosopher to improve largely upon the hints afforded him by his predecessors, we cannot depend upon the hypostatic doctrine being older than Plato himself. It would take up too much of my time, and perhaps might produce more perplexity than illustration, to hunt

hunt about for long quotations upon this matter: so I shall content myself with setting down such conception of the Platonic opinions as remains with me from what little reading I have had in his dialogues, and Cudworth's intellectual system: first premising some observations upon the manner of human apprehension in general to render my account the clearer.

When we learn our accidence we are taught that a noun substantive is that which can stand by itself, whence we are easily led to imagine any thing we can express by a substantive contains something substantial, having an existence independent of every thing else. Those substances indeed, which have not a permanent application, must be excepted, but whatever we find convenient to distinguish constantly by one appellation, we account an existing substance; being too apt to take our own ideas, and the names we express them by, for real essences of things. Thus when a carpenter has prepared the shelves and other parts of a bookcase, if he ties them up in a bundle for convenience of carriage, the bundle is no being different from what they were while scattered about his shop, because he will unbind them again as soon as he comes to your house: but when he has fastened them together properly with glue and

and nails, the bookcase begins to exist, and is esteemed a new thing, having uses and properties not to be found in the disjointed materials.

A crowd is no distinct existence, because it will disperse again presently; but if the same people be erected into a corporation, there is a new existence superadded, and they become a Person in law capable to sue and be sued, to purchase chattels, grant leases, and perform many other acts of a single person: therefore we say the Bank did not exist before King William's reign, nor the South Sea company before Queen Anne's, but they still exist individually the same companies, although perhaps there are scarce any of the original members living. And there are folks who will battle with you tooth and nail, that when the King incorporates six hundred men into a regiment, there is a new being produced which was not existent before, while the men were rambling at large about the country: and that this being would remain the same, although by deaths, desertions, and recruitings, every man in it were changed.

Since then we of this enlightened age are so prone to take a noun substantive for a substance, and place existence in composition, incorporation, and regimentality; no wonder if heathen Plato, born almost in the infancy of

of philosophy, should mistake his own ideas for real beings having a separate existence, independent on the objects from whence he drew them. Then since all things discover and distinguish themselves to us by their forms and qualities, nor can we perceive or apprehend any thing totally divested of them, and since forms and qualities may be expressed by nouns substantive, he conceived them to have a reality and existence of their own, independent on the subject wherein they were found: for the roundness in a piece of clay is a different thing from the clay itself, and though there were no bodies in the world perfectly round, as perhaps there are not, still there would be such a thing as roundness in the abstract, of which we can currently form an idea.

But all particular objects became what they are by the qualities residing in them, which constitute their essence; and upon being transferred to other objects, carry the essence along with them. Thus the piece of clay became round by the introduction of roundness into it, the merchants became a Bank and South Sea Company, and the six hundred fighting men a regiment, by having incorporeity and regimentality introduced among them: and if all the particles of the clay, proprietors of the companies, or men of

the regiment were exchanged successively for others, the rotundity, incorporeity, and regimentality would be transferred to a new set of constituents, which would have the same essence that had belonged to the old ones. Yet Plato having a clearer head than our modern philosophers, could distinguish quality from substance, and discern that quality cannot exist alone, but must reside either in some object where we perceive it, or in the abstractions of our own mind: and this it might do without confounding its particular existence with that of the subject possessing it. For the ancients had a notion that one thing might inexist within another, still retaining its existence distinct from that: thus the roundness inexists in the clay, and the thought of it inexists in my understanding; yet roundness is not clay, nor understanding, neither are clay and understanding roundness. And they conceived further, that each quality wherever residing though in a thousand places at once, was still numerically the same: for if you and I look upon a thou- marbles, the rotundity in them all, and the rotundity remaining in our memory after we have turned our backs upon them, is one and the same individual existence.

Nevertheless Plato gave the preference to quality above substance, as being more stable and

and steady, for substances fluctuate without ceasing, perpetually changing their essences, becoming this thing or that according to the qualities infused among them: but qualities must always remain the same they ever were, in whatever subject residing. A beautiful young lady, if she lives long enough, perchance may grow ugly and old: but youth can never be anility, nor beauty become ugliness. A colt may grow to be a horse, and afterwards made a gelding: but colteity, horseity, and geldingeity, must always continue themselves, in whatever beast inexisting. A mob of sturdy gypseys, when men are scarce, may be pressed into a regiment: but gypsiety and regimentality can never be turned into one another by all the powers of nature or royal prerogative.

5. From hence he inferred, that qualities were unchangeable, eternal, and uncreated, incapable of losing their essence into whatever subjects they migrated, or of suffering diminution upon being dispersed into ever so many: for there must have been such a thing as roundness in the abstract from everlasting, it could not but be, and whether inexisting in clay or marble, in our memory or meditation, it can never change into squareness, or gibbosity, or whiteness, or softness, or any other quality, but must always continue invariably itself;

itself; and loses nothing of its reality and existence in one subject, by being communicated to millions beside.

But here a question will naturally occur, that since qualities have had an eternal duration, yet cannot exist alone without some subject wherein to inexist, where could they find such receptacle for their inexistence before there were any bodies to concrete with them, or intelligent creatures to receive them in the abstract? To this it was readily answered, that they existed in God, whose uncreated substance might well afford them an eternal duration: for God is unchangeable, without beginning, in all his Attributes, having had nothing to learn from everlasting; therefore every thing known or knowable must have been perfectly known to him from all eternity, and in his knowledge the things so known did from all eternity inexist. That these ideas in the divine mind were the archetypes from whence all forms in bodies, and ideas in the human mind were taken, in a manner analogous to an impression made upon wax with a seal, which may communicate its figures without parting with them, or diminishing any thing of the originals engraven upon it.

It is not easy to account this way for the ideas of pain, uneasiness, ignorance, doubt, error

error, malice, selfishness and passion, too frequently inexistent in the minds of men, nor whether Plato supposed them too impressions taken from archetyes existing eternally in the divine mind: perhaps he would have said they were only negations of their opposite qualities: but let him look to that, it is not my business to defend his scheme, I am only a reporter.

To go on then with our philosopher; as we have but one understanding to contain all that multiplicity of ideas and abstract essences inexistent in it, so the divine understanding is one, and the same throughout that infinitude of knowledge whereto it extends. But understanding alone can produce nothing without something else to employ it: for we find by experience that we can bring no work to perfection merely by understanding it, but there must be other causes to co-operate with the ideal, or they will rest in empty speculation: and after all our refinements we can form none other conceptions of God, than what are built upon such little likeness as we can find of him in his image, the human soul.

Accordingly Plato, observing that we must have a motive or disposition of mind to set our understanding at work, and a volition or power to make it take effect, before we can execute

execute what we know, ascribed three similar principles to the divine nature: the first he called To Agathon or Goodness, the second Nous or Intelligence, and the third Psyche or Activity: and conceiving our knowledge of objects to be a voluntary act of the mind, not a passive perception, he supposed this must likewise have a motive to give it birth; therefore Nous was generated by To Agathon, and from these two proceeded that exertion by which all things were created and formed.

It remained to find a general name for these three princles; Quality would not do, because the ideas and abstract essences inexisted in the Nous, and though qualities may co-exist together in the same subject, as squareness, yellowness, and softness in wax, yet they cannot inexist in one another, for yellowness cannot be soft, nor squareness yellow: nor could substance be the term, for then they must have been component parts of the To On or divine substance, which would have destroyed the unity of the Godhead, because substances cannot inexist in any thing, much less coexist in the same subject. Therefore he styled them Hypostases or Subsistences, which is something between substance and quality, inexisting in the one, and serving as a receptacle for the others

others inexistency within it. Thus here was a Trinity in Unity, consisting of three co-eternal, co-equal, co-infinite Hypostases inexisting in the To On, the one undivided substance. I do not recommend this explanation to any body, as being not quite sure of understanding it myself; and Cudworth owns the Platonic was not exactly the same with the orthodox Christian Trinity, though much nearer to it than Arianism: but I have never yet happened to meet with any other light attempted to be thrown upon the word Hypostasis.

As to the Æons, which Cudworth tells us were holden by some people, they will not help us at all; for Æon or Aion is only a Greek word for Eternal, which being an adjective has not the least pretence to be taken for an hypostasis or even an existence, and we shall be never the wiser for being told that there are several eternals in the divine substance: besides that Athanasius positively declares, there are not three eternals, but one eternal.

6. Having had so little success with the Greek, let us try what can be done upon the Latin word Persona: for we may presume the Latin fathers understood the sense of their Greek cotemporaries, and chose a term whereinto Hypostasis might be properly translated

translated without losing any thing of the original used before in the Church. And we may with better reason expect to find this word intelligible, because not a scripture term, but pitched upon as expressive of a scripture doctrine: but when men change the terms wherein things have been delivered, and go to express another's sense in language of their own, it is to be presumed they will employ terms familiar to the hearer, which might make that clear to his apprehension, they had judged obscure before: especially if the word they use be found to have had a current signification, one can scarce imagine they would employ it in any other which must render it equivocal, when they were not pinned down to that by authority in exclusion of other terms less liable to misapprehension.

Now Persona signified originally a vizard used by the Roman actors upon the stage, it was made hollow and big enough to contain the whole head of the actor, and was shaped and coloured as near as could be guessed to imitate the features and complexion of the person he was to represent: so that if you were well acquainted with Oedipus, or Atreus, or Priam, from pictures or statues of them extant, you might immediately know which of them you were to imagine standing before

before you, as soon as Roscius entered, before a word was spoken. Therefore Persona is the same as Character, a very different thing from Person in the English sense of the word, for Garrick is still the same person whether in the character of Lear, or Richard: and though we sometimes say, In the person, this is only a contraction of the sentence which would run at length, in representing the person of Lear. For the very person of Lear cannot be introduced upon the stage, or if he could he might then speak for himself without wanting any body to speak for him: nor do the audience ever imagine Garrick to lose his own personality, for then they would not applaud him for imitating so truly the gestures, the countenance, the tenor of voice suitable to the character he represents, all which would flow naturally from the real person without any skill or art to produce them.

I would gladly have forborn mingling theatrical ideas among our meditations on so sacred a subject, but it was not easy to avoid them in explaining a term derived originally from the stage. Yet there is no necessity the word should always carry precisely its first signification; we find the contrary in human transactions: a man may act in several characters yet without assuming those that are counterfeit; if he be invested with

authority,

authority, he may still behave with familiarity and freedom among his friends in his private character, but always keep a distance and dignity when acting in his character of a magistrate, and may instruct his family or intimates with what decorum and forms of respect to appear before him in the exercises of his office. Our laws consider a justice of peace or a constable as different persons in the execution of their authority, and in their private dealings: the same treatment which would be no offence against the one, is an indictable misdemeanor against the other.

Therefore it would be blasphemy to imagine God counterfeiting the character of any other: if he acts in several, he acts always in characters peculiarly his own, incommunicable to any creature. I have before found it convenient to apprehend him under two characters, in a Chapter of the second Volume bearing that title: wherein he is distinguished into the Creator and Governor of the universe, one producing substances with their primary properties, and constituting the nature of things, the other directing his measures thereby so as to produce all the good possible thereout: the one enacting laws which are binding upon the other.

I had nothing then in my thoughts relative to the subject in hand, but was led into the notion

notion by the difficulties occurring from the mixture of evil interspersed in the world, upon which I imagined we might satisfy ourselves the easier by considering him as two distinct persons, two in conception only, but in reality one. I shall not take this for a foundation to build upon, being only my own imagination which any body may follow or not as he finds most convenient for his own use: and perhaps contains nothing similar to the Trinity, or if it does, the Governor must include all the three Persons, yet not confounding them with one another, but without observing their distinction. Nevertheless, having hit upon a distinction of characters, I began to think it might serve as a clue to lead me further than I then had occasion to go: and having exercised my thoughts that way, has probably been helpful to me since I applied them particularly to the subject before us, by bringing them to fall readier into their present train, which I shall now endeavour to draw out to view.

7. In the Chapter of Providence I have shewn it agreeable with our ideas of the Deity to imagine that he might once for all have given his work of universal nature so perfect a constitution as that it might have run on its appointed course for ever, without needing any further application of his power: on the other

other hand, that it was not inconsistent with those ideas to suppose him purposely to have framed his laws of nature in such a manner as to require his own interpositions, which were not sudden expedients to correct unforseen deficiencies in his design, but predetermined, and comprized in the original plan together with the operations of second causes.

Having thus found the divine interposition alike probable in theory both on the negative and affirmative sides, I proceeded to examine whether it might be determined by the contemplation of visible nature, and could find no evidence of an interposition later than the formation of the planetary system, and this earth we inhabit: since when, so far as the eye of human reason can discern, all things both in the natural and moral world have gone on by the stated rules governing the motions of bodies, and actions of free agents. Nevertheless the field still remains open for such evidence as can be produced of further interposition, and it becomes us to give the divines a fair hearing of such evidence as they do produce. It is not my business to examine the weight of their evidence: I have taken no more upon me than to attempt a clearer understanding of what they say, than hitherto has been commonly had, so that we

may

may comprehend what it is we are to receive, or reject.

They tell us that God created the matter, and gave the form of this visible nature we behold: thus much we knew before. But they tell us likewise, that he has interposed many times since by miracles, prophecies, and revelations, that he united himself to one particular man, so as to become the same person with him from his birth, that he frequently co-operates with our endeavours to discover truths and perform good works, we could not have done without such aid, that these operations were performed by three Personæ in one God, not jointly, but each having a distinct share of them: the union with manhood and all done in virtue of that union was the work of the Son, the assistance afforded occasionally to men in general was the province of the holy Spirit, and all the rest of the Father.

By these distinct manners of operation, God appears to act in three characters, easily separable from one another in our conception, but joining mutually in advancement of the general design, and executing the principal strokes in the plan of Providence respecting the moral world. The Father acted in the character of King or Governor, controlling the courses of nature and actions of

second

second causes by immediate exertions of his power, and by his signs and wonders prepared the minds of men for reception of the benefits imparted from the other two. The Son acted in the character of a co-agent or partner, not controlling the mental or bodily powers of Jesus, but adding a force and vigour which could not have been furnished by natural causes: supplied what had been left deficient in the plan of Providence, and rendered mankind capable of reaping advantage from the effusions of the Holy Spirit. This last acts in the character of a friend and monitor, not working with the power and majesty of a monarch, nor dwelling inseparably with the mind of man, but imperceptibly throwing in assistance from time to time, as wanted, and thereby filling up the last lines in the divine plan.

8. For the effects of the union between God and man, I shall have occasion to consider them more particularly in another Chapter, to be entitled on the Redemption: I need here only offer my idea of the union itself. Our common notions of unity seem very confused and variable: whatever collection hangs long together without being visibly disunited, or changed in its constituent parts, and all that time bears one name, we esteem one thing. The whole composition of a man,

blood

blood, bones, skin, hair, nails, we style an individual, and apprehend to be one substance, one existence: if he lose a leg or an arm, if he grow fat till his girdle will not come half round him, if he cut his hair, and pare his nails, and they grow again, if every particle in his body be changed by perspiration and nourishment, still it is the same individual substance. But whoever will reflect steadily on the nature of substances must see, that they can never change into one another, however one may be substituted in the place of another, without perceiving it: nor can any two, how closely soever placed, or in what manner soever joined together, become one, but must remain numerically distinct, though we may not be able to distinguish them by our senses, nor separate them by any experiment.

And the case is the same with substances of different natures, for a spirit can no more become a body, or body a spirit, nor both together make one individual substance, than two bodies can: therefore to say, that God was changed into man, or man into God, or that both united made one person in the modern philosophical sense of the word, is as flat a contradiction as that number two is number one. So that we must not understand the hypostatic union of a consubstantiality,

or

or numerical identity between God and man; nor does the Church affirm any such thing, but teaches us to look into ourselves for an explanation of her meaning; as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Now let us consider in what manner our soul and body is one, and we shall find it to be not by conversion of spirit into body, but by taking body into a participation of functions with spirit: not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For personality belongs in property to spirit alone: body has none of its own, but assumes a borrowed personality from the particular spirit whereto it is vitally united. If the spirit of Euphorbus migrated into a cow, then into an eagle, and afterwards Pythagoras, still it was the same person in all migrations: and if the cow suffered for the faults of Euphorbus, here was no injustice done, because the party offending bore the punishment. So if the substance of your arm should by successive change of particles have become the substance of mine, which is not impossible to have been the case considering the daily fluctuation both of our humours and solids, during its respective union with either of us, it partakes of our personalities, and all the good and evil deeds performed by it were your, and my deeds.

Let

Let us now apply this to the hypostatic union, wherein though we must understand personality in another sense, as importing character instead of numerical identity, yet the manner of union will remain the same: for the character of moral wisdom, innocence, and force to resist all pain, terror, and other temptations, belonged solely to the Deity: no human soul could act up to it; until the manhood being taken into God, that is, God being pleased perpetually to supply what was wanting in human nature, Jesus was united to the Son, which together became one Christ; whose whole conduct was of a piece throughout, running in one constant tenor and character, and his actions were those of the united agency. For all the acts of Jesus were acts of the Son, and the Son performed nothing but by the instrumentality of Jesus: as the spirit of a man performs nothing but by the instrumentality of his bodily powers.

9. As to the terms employed to express the origin of the two Personæ from the First, we must not expect to learn any thing from them concerning the manner of their rising: for Begotten cannot be understood in the same sense wherein we use it upon all other occasions, and Proceeding is too general a term to afford us any light. We all proceed from the loins of Adam, the waters of a river pro-

ceed from its sources, diseases proceed from intemperance, wars and disturbances from the selfishness and vanity of mankind, the traveller to France proceeds from Canterbury to Dover, the school-boy proceeds from Latin to Greek. Besides, Proceeding is not a scripture term, and if Begotten had been applied to the Spirit who drew his origin from the other two Personæ jointly, it might have raised as gross ideas, as Bishop Lavington has charged upon the Gnostics. Therefore the Church found it necessary to take a different term, and probably chose one of vague and indeterminate signification, to express a matter whereof they could give no clear and accurate description.

The word Begotten we find often employed in Scripture, but even there it is used figuratively, not as expressive of the Son's existence, but belonging originally to the man Jesus, whom Saint Luke proves to be the Son of God by deriving his genealogy from Adam, which was the Son of God. In this sense we are all so too; for though we cannot trace our genealogy, there is no doubt of our being lineally descended from Adam which was the Son of God. But Jesus was called by way of eminence the Son of God, and the Son of Man, as being the promised seed appointed by particular designation of Providence to

restore

restore the whole race of men from their fallen state of perdition. The Scripture abounds in figurative expressions taken from the Asiatic pinguid style, many of them very different from those current among us, and therefore appearing forced, harsh, and enigmatical: nor perhaps has there been a more plentiful source of error and perplexity in Religion than the interpretation of figures either by taking them literally, or expecting too close a resemblance, or that the similitude must always be the same in different cases whereto they are applied."

The same figure of begetting is applied variously to both natures of Christ: sometimes he is derived from God through the medium of Adam, sometimes said to be conceived by the Virgin Mary of the Holy Ghost, sometimes called the only begotten, and sometimes the first born of every creature; which cannot be understood here of being our elder brother by adoption, unless you will suppose every creature without exception to rank among the adopted. For the purpose of the Scriptures was not to instruct men in metaphysical subtilties, but by proper application of the figures familiar among the Jewish populace, to fix their expectation of a deliverer and teacher upon the person of Christ, and thereby prepare them for a reverential and willing reception of his doctrines.

 Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, since the gap designedly left in the plan of Providence, making room for the lapse of man and entrance of sin into the world, gave birth to the office of a Christ, which else could have had no functions to execute, therefore it may be said even in modern propriety of language, that the second Persona was generated by the first. And since the same circumstance of the original design, together with the benefits worked out for the race of men in general, gave occasion to the assistance requisite for bringing particular persons within the reach of those benefits; therefore it may be said with like propriety, that the third Persona proceeded from the other two.

10. According to the distinctions of Personæ and offices above laid down, we must ascribe all miraculous works to the Father, to whose operation must be referred that illapse of a bodily shape in the manner of a dove at Jordan, and the cloven tongues appearing at the feast of Pentecost; which were sent for signs and testimonies to the by-standers rather than for immediate use of the persons on whom they descended: for we can scarce imagine the second Persona wanted any assistance to perform his office; nor is the office of the third any other than to confer grace, not to teach men languages. And though Saint Paul mentions various gifts of

the

the Spirit, among which he reckons miracle and prophecy, yet if we will keep our thoughts distinct and clear, we can attribute only the proper management of them to the Spirit, but the gifts themselves to the Father: and the calling them gifts of the Spirit might be solely in compliance with the Jewish language, who used from ancient times to speak of prophesying and performing mighty works by the Spirit of the Lord, long before the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed.

So likewise we may suppose Christ worked miracles as Moses and the Prophets did, by the power of the Father accompanying him, not imparted to him: for one can hardly imagine a power given to a man to operate as a second cause in stopping the diurnal rotation of the Earth, when Joshua said, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon; nor that the bodily powers of Jesus should be made instrumental in rectifying the optics of a man born blind. Neither did Christ himself claim the powers he appeared to exert as his own, but ascribed the glory of them to the Father: he said, My Father worketh and I work; his own share was no more than to discern the proper times when miracles would be worked, and to call for them as occasion required. The office of

the

the Persona reached only to the faculty of Volition, for we may see by the struggles in what is called the last agony, the little fluctuations of counsel just before being betrayed, and the last pathetic exclamation upon the cross, that natural causes were left to take their ordinary effect upon the imagination of Jesus; so that we may conclude he had the same assaults of passion as we have, but never was overcome by them, and was in human infirmity and in all other things like unto us, sin only excepted.

But the Scripture blends and mingles ideas of the different Personæ together; Christ is said to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, to be led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to grow in grace and favour both with God and Man, to cast out devils by the Spirit of the Father; and the calumniating that power in him seems to be called blaspheming against the holy Ghost. The new birth is properly the work of the Spirit, and all supernatural application upon the hearts of particular persons belongs peculiarly to his office: yet it is said of those who love Christ that the Father and he will come unto them and make their abode with them; and our Church tells us, that upon receiving the sacrament devoutly, we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us.

So

So that it is neither necessary upon all occasions, nor practised by the best authorities, to distinguish exactly between the acts of the several Personæ.

11. The name Christ is the same as Anointed, which term is likewise applied to the reception of the holy Ghost, sometimes called a Chrism or Unction. This name doubtless was chosen as being familiar to the Jews in order to lead them by their expectation of a temporal king styled by them the Lord's anointed, to attend to the promulgation of a new law.

For the like reason we may presume the other appellation of Word or Logos employed, because the Jews by a Metonyme common among them, called a thing promised the Promise or Word given: so this appellation implied no more, than that Jesus was the person of whom all former prophecies had given assurance that he should come for deliverance of mankind from the evils oppressing them. But being frequently applied to Christ as a title or proper name, has induced many to believe it contained something mysterious, expressive of certain qualities or powers peculiar to him: and because Logos signifies either a word spoken or the faculty of reason, they conceived of the Word as something analogous to the Nous

or

or second Hypostasis of Plato, and made the Persona to whom it belonged the Demiourgos or maker of the world; confirmed herein by an expression of Saint John's, By him all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

I am not theologian enough to undertake the exposition of that text: perhaps it may mean that the whole plan of Providence was formed with a reference to the part he should act in it, and without such reference not a single stroke was drawn of all those intricate multitudes that were drawn. But I believe now the literal sense is not holden orthodox, at least I have not happened to meet with any person of repute in the Church understanding it so since Beveridge, who might be as good a man as ever lived, but certainly not the most judicious. To the best of my apprehension, God appears to have acted in his character of the Father when he made all things: we are taught in the Apostle's creed, to believe God the Father almighty maker of Heaven and earth; and in the Nicene, to believe him maker of all things visible and invisible; that he made them in wisdom I do not doubt, but that wisdom should be an agent or efficient cause of all the material particles falling into their proper station, I cannot comprehend.

In

In the other sense of Logos, as taken for a word or command, it seems as little capable of being an efficient cause as Wisdom: nor yet do I see any necessity to understand by God's saying, Let there be light, that he pronounced an audible voice, or issued any command at all. What I should imagine intended by that sublime manner of narration was to express that the acts of God are not operose, nor performed by degrees, as are all performances of man; who must put his materials in order one by one, and do half his work before he can finish the whole: but that upon the first exertion of omnipotence, light instantly sprang forth, not like the dawn of day by gradual encrease, but in full perfection at once.

I have promised to build nothing upon Hypothesis, or else I could find a way to make the word avail as a cause, by help of the Mundane Soul: who pervading intimately all the particles of a Chaos, and being active throughout in every part, might bring them into that arrangement we call the order of nature, compound them into elements, and give them the motions requisite for bringing forth all those productions we see generated, yet could not proceed to action without a command given, and a plan assigned from above of the measures expedient

dient to be taken. Upon this supposition God may be said to have made all things by his word as an operating cause, that is, by communication of his plan and declaration of his Will to the Mundane Soul: as a man builds a house by his instructions and orders given to the mason and the carpenter. Yet even here the Word would not be an efficient, but an authoritative and directive cause: and God must be esteemed to act in his character of Father the Supreme Omniscient Monarch of the Universe, not as the Son in the character of an associate united to some created mind, keeping the Will invariably in a constant course of rectitude.

12. The divine attributes ascribed by Athanasius to the Personæ must be understood of the Godhead; for they were all the same almighty eternal, uncreated Being, acting in several capacities: and it is remarkable he has said nothing of omnipresence and omniscience, which can hardly belong to them all in their distinct personal character. The Son is described capable of loco-motion; he came down from heaven, descended into hell, rose again and re-ascended into heaven: while upon earth he was confined to the body of Jesus, moving to and fro with that present and absent where that was either. During the day and two nights of his continuance in

hell,

hell, God acted not in the filial character any where upon earth: and in his character of the Spirit, he acts or is present nowhere unless in the minds of men.

As to the Omniscience, this makes no part of the filial character: Christ himself disclaims it, attributing to the Father what extraordinary knowledge he had more than a human understanding might have attained, whose improvement had been in no single instance neglected; for the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, who showeth him all things that himself doeth. And lest we should understand this of all things without exception, he declares expressly that he did not know the day and hour of the last judgment.

Then if we apply Eternity to the distinction of persons, and say that God has from everlasting acted in the three several characters; besides that we shall make three Eternals, for though but one eternal God or Being, yet there would be three eternals, that is, eternal persons, this would infer an eternity of the Creation too; because we can scarce imagine God to assume characters before there were objects for him to act upon in them: so the generation and procession could not take place until there were at least in designation, a race of lapsed and imperfect creatures needing

needing an atonement and continual assistance to rescue them from perpetual misery. From whence it will further follow, that the Universe, upon the whole, has continued for ever in the same state, the several parts changing in a perpetual rotation; so that there has always been somewhere or other a fallen world to be the theatre whereon God might operate in his three distinct characters: and all the texts expressing a distinction of the Son from the Father before the world was, will be so many scripture proofs for the existence of worlds prior to that usually understood by the name.

And for the possibility of the created universe with all the substances contained in it being eternal, those who hold the eternity of the Personæ have least cause of any to boggle at it, for whatever he meant by begetting, and proceeding, it must be acknowledged the Father was the substantial and efficient cause of the Son, and the Spirit: if then they were co-eternal with him, it follows, that an effect may be as old as the cause, posterior in order of nature only, not in time. But though Creation be different from generation and procession, yet it as little requires length of time to effect it: for God said, Let there be light, and there was light: in like manner it may be that he said long before, Let there be

be innumerable hosts of material and perceptive individual substances, each in such and such particular station, some constituting compounds by their mutual juxta-position, having such and such impulses of motion among them, and it was so: nor can any man pretend to limit the time when it was he said this. Therefore there is no contradiction nor absurdity in the thought of the creature being co-eternal with the Creator; posterior in order indeed it must have been, but not necessarily in time: for God might have created as soon as he was God omnipotent, that is, from all eternity without beginning.

Nevertheless, since the conceptions of men are various, and I should be glad to make every one's thoughts consistent with themselves, if not reconcilable with those of other people, I shall try what can be done for the benefit of such as hold it impossible, heterodox, and absurd, that there should have been any created being existent six thousand years ago. Yet I suppose they will allow God to have existed from all eternity, and that he might from all eternity have designed and laid out the plan he was to execute in time: so the persons might have been eternally distinct in the bosom and counsels of God, who contemplated the gracious and glorious purposes he should accomplish in those three characters.

characters. And this may serve for an explanation of the text, Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

13. And now I have done my best towards explaining this most mysterious article of the doctrines taught in our church, I hope I shall not be suspected of a secret intention to undermine the foundations of Religion, nor yet to mislead or impose any thing upon the consciences of men: but it will be seen that my purpose was nothing more than an honest attempt to put a rational and intelligible construction upon the words delivered, without pronouncing upon the truth and falsehood of the matters contained therein when clearly understood. For I would be considered as a commentator, not as a judge: I pretend to no authority nor extraordinary skill in divinity, therefore lie under no temptation to conclude with, This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. But such conclusion having been annexed to expositions in former times, leads me to examine what it is that makes a fundamental, necessary to secure us from eternal perdition.

Happiness is the ultimate end of action, and every man's own happiness the ultimate end to him: but happiness consists in the aggregate

aggregate of pleasures, not in any single pleasure taken by itself. Now it often happens than an action, which gives us present pleasure, may occasion great uneasiness in the consequences; as on the other hand an action painful in present, may produce great pleasures afterwards: therefore the first fundamental is Prudence, or a regard to the whole income redounding from any measure of conduct; with a preference of the sum of happiness, remaining upon balance, before any present enjoyment or avoidance of trouble. But as our prospect does not stand limited to the scenes of this life, nor the consequences of our conduct terminate here; so neither ought our computation of happiness nor measures of prudence to be confined to temporal advantage.

Yet we can make no discoveries in visible nature to direct us in what manner to prepare for our future welfare: the only rational ground we have to go upon, must be in contemplation of the Supreme Being, who is one, almighty, all-wise, omniscient, beneficent, and equitable, God, Maker and Governor of the universe, having formed the whole into one kingdom with a mutual connection of interest between all the members. Hence we are to regard ourselves as citizens of the world in the largest sense of the word, having no separate

rate interest from that of the whole; so that it is the interest of every one of us to advance the good of the Creation by contributing our little share thereto, in such part of it wherewith we have immediate intercourse, doing all the service we can to our fellow-creatures, but still preferring the sum of happiness, whether in the extent of our services to many, or solid fruits of them to particular persons, before present pleasure or gratification: and this is the surest way we can proceed to make preparation for our own future advantage.

Thus it is our knowledge of the Deity that lays the foundation of our social duties, bringing them home to our own interest: it points out the only measures conducive to our happiness hereafter, and it likewise secures us present peace and solace of mind. Therefore it behoves us to acquire a strong idea of the universal government of God, that nothing happens without his knowledge and permission; a sound and lively sense of his Providence ordering all things for the best to the whole, and a firm persuasion of his equity ensuring to us our share of the good dispensed: which will render us satisfied under his administration, pleased with our existence: industrious in promptingthe benefit of others, and attentive to our own advantages, with a manly

disdain

disdain of all momentary gratifications that would beguile us away from them.

These conceptions then of the divine nature and attributes are the fundamental and essence of Religion, which whoever possesses compleatly, needs nothing else to procure his happiness. There are those who pretend they can attain all this by their own strength exerted in the due exercise of their natural reason: the Church asserts the contrary, and that they can neither know how to go about their work without the instructions given in the Gospel, nor proceed in it effectually without the divine assistance, which they must recur to the same oracle for directions how to obtain. It is not my business to enter into the controversy between them: I am now to follow the clue given by the Church, making my observations as I pass along the ground whither she leads.

Now in order to receive benefit from the Gospel, a man must be persuaded of its authenticity, and of those doctrines expressed therein so plainly as that he who runs may read: such as that mankind is fallen from that perfect state wherein they were originally created; that God has manifested his power at several times among them by miracles, prophecies, and revelations; that Jesus Christ was a divine Person, the Son of God, who

by his death and resurrection reinstated them in that capacity of happiness they had lost by the fall; nevertheless, this is a capacity only, not an actual attainment, of no avail to particular persons without their endeavours to live a life of righteousness, strengthened by the assistance of the Holy Spirit to make them effectual; that the Scriptures are the word of God containing the rules of righteousness, together with certain ceremonies and institutions necessary to lead into the practice of them, and to obtain the divine assistance. These I take to be the fundamentals: but what there is of them peculiar to Christianity (for many of the doctrines plainly expressed, and the necessity of our own endeavours, are not peculiar) are remotely so, beause connected with those above described as essentially fundamental.

For Christ assures us that no man can come to the Father but through the Son: so then coming to the Father, that is, attaining such a just and full sense of the divine Attributes as Adam might, is the fundamental point, and were it now possible to have access any other way, this would not be needful; but because it is not possible, therefore coming to the Son becomes fundamental derivatively for the sake of that originally so, whereto it opens the sole passage: yet it is unalterably

unalterably fundamental, the derivation being made through human nature which we can never divest ourselves of.

14. We have not yet found all the articles of the Athanasian creed to be fundamentals, nor essential characteristics to distinguish a disciple of Christ: he cannot well be such indeed without believing Christ a divine person, and the Son of God in some sense or other peculiar to himself, and that the operations of the Holy Ghost are the acts of God himself; but I apprehend he may be a very good Christian without holding the Trinity in Unity as there described, and all the particulars of the hypostatic union, for they are not to be found in Scripture. I do not deny the sense of them is contained there, but a man must have gone through the University and read a library of books to find it out; and when he has done, it is ten to one but another man, who has had a university education, and read a library too, will pronounce him heretical.

We have observed in § 10. that the Scripture frequently blends the acts and offices of the three Personæ together in such manner as to make it scarce possible to distinguish them, nor is it always easy to know when what is spoken of Christ should be applied to his human nature, or his divine, or to both

jointly. He is called the Son of David and proved to be so by a genealogical table, which can relate only to the man Jesus, for the Son of God, nor the united Christ, was not begotten from the loins of David: he is called so too as being the king and deliverer of whom David was a type, and the Logos or Promise which was to descend into union with one of David's seed; and this double sense made the difficulty that puzzled the Jews upon the question, If David called him Lord, how then was he his son?

Hence I think we may reasonably infer, that these metaphysical niceties are not to be ranked among the things which he that runs may read, nor were intended to be given in the Scriptures as fundamentals of the Christian faith. Not but that a man may laudably take pains to understand every thing recorded there, yet he need not lie under terrors for the event, nor give himself over as a child of perdition, if he should not comprehend, or should happen to think wrong upon the mysterious points: provided the mistake is such as shall not involve him in error with respect to the doctrines plainly expressed; and this proviso is necessary to be considered for understanding what I am going to offer next.

For popular opinions are always bound up in

in sets, a number of articles compose together one entire system. The common Christian cannot examine them singly, he must take every one or reject all; and if you can set him against any one, he generally does reject all, and passes over into an opposite sect. But it is not unusual for crafty or wrong-headed persons to draw the unwary imperceptibly into an opposite sect by their own interpretations of a received article. When this happens it becomes necessary to obviate the mischief by drawing out the article into more particulars than were needful before, which then grows into a fundamental, because connected with what was truly so, protecting it as a necessary defence and outwork. But an outwork, though of no use for inhabitancy or cultivation or any accommodation of life, yet is of necessary use for the defence of the place: and the more remote these adventitious fundamentals are from the essential, the more sacred they ought to be esteemed; because having no intrinsic value, there is nothing beside the opinion of their sacredness to engage men, who cannot discern the dependence of their safety in essentials upon them, to maintain their ground against attacks.

15. Now we may presume the divines of sound judgment and piety, about Athanasius's time,

time, found the system of Arius essentially erroneous, but supported by some plausible interpretations of the texts relating to the Personæ: it became necessary then to compile the creed commonly called Athanasian, to be couched in expressions opposite to those used by Arius, as an outwork to protect the Christian flock from being beguiled by his insinuations. To instance in one particular point: I know very little of Arius, but have heard enough of the Omoousion and Omoiousion to persuade me he taught the Son was not of the same but of similar substance with the Father, that is, God made or created another God, numerically distinct from himself, but of the same divine nature, and alike infinite in power, wisdom, goodness, and all the other attributes.

Now I must own this notion seems to me productive of conceptions essentially erroneous, as being derogatory to the Deity by supposing the work of his hand could be equal to himself, and therefore cannot blame the Church for guarding against it by opposite terms sufficient to answer the purpose. For though the common Christian might not exactly know the difference between numerical and specific identity, or similitude of substance, he must know that Same was a different word from Similar; and if he could

not

not tell precisely what was meant by Begotten, still he might know well enough that it was not Made, nor Created; so would stand upon his guard when he heard any body using the prohibited words, not to heed any thing else they said. This creed, then, as the Church was circumstanced at that time, became a fundamental: but being only circumstantially so, had the greater need of a sacred awe to enforce a regard to it. Therefore Athanasius, or whoever thought proper to assume his name, inserted the damnatory clauses, because they knew the plain man had but one option, either to be orthodox or Arian throughout, and fall into all the errors of that sect; which yet he might innocently slide into by degrees, unless armed against the first approaches with a sacred dread and horror of a speculative mistake they knew must draw fatal consequences behind.

Thus the fundamental article seems to be negative rather than affirmative, to believe there are not three Gods nor the Son a creature; not actually to believe the Trinity in Unity; with all the other hard words employed in the creed: and we may presume they exacted only a verbal, not an intellectual assent. For they must know it was impossible for the vulgar to comprehend them, and that no

no man can assent to a proposition he does not comprehend, any further than that it contains a truth, though he does not know what it is.

Having made this concession, for fear the freethinker should turn it to a use I never intended, I must remark that there is a very material difference between comprehending the thing affirmed, and comprehending what is said of it: the former is not necessary to gain assent, the want of the latter is no possible ground either of assent or dissent, other than that vague one of an unknown truth. I can believe that something has existed in all eternity without a cause, yet I can neither comprehend eternity, nor how any thing can exist without a cause, because all the things I have experience of had causes of their existence. If a man pretends he carries home Paul's church in his pocket, I comprehend clearly what he says and see plainly it is impossible; therefore must think him a liar while I take him seriously, and not as a joker meaning a print of the church. If he says he moved two balls lying in close contact upon a billiard-table by touching only one of them, I can easily believe him, though I cannot comprehend how the hindmost ball can begin to move before the foremost has gone off to leave room for it, nor yet how

how it can give motion to the other before it has any itself; so that the motions of both seem necessarily prior in order and time, to one another. But if he tells me, that motion is the act of being in power so far forth as in power, I do not comprehend what he says, so cannot possibly give either assent or dissent: it may be as true as the Gospel for aught I know, and if I have a good opinion of his judgment and sincerity, I shall believe he has a meaning in the expression, and that it contains a certain truth, though what the truth is I cannot possibly guess.

I doubt not there are multitudes of pious Christians, and many very sensible persons, to whom the Athanasian creed appears much the same language as the act of being in power so far forth as in power, in which case it will be impossible for them to give it an intellectual assent: yet for all that, if they have any opinion of the Church, they may easily believe it contains the true Christian doctrine, and this is enough to keep them from the Arian heresy; for little as they can comprehend the terms employed, they cannot fail of discerning their contrariety to those of similar substance and a created God, or a creature invested with the divine Attributes, and made equal with God.

16. There seems little danger now to the public

public from the Arian heresy: it may have crept into the closets of a few speculatists, but you can do nothing with them by creeds: force them to repeat what words you please; they will put their own sense upon them; for the Rosycrusian art of transmutation will work wonders, as often converting gold into base metals as these into gold. Therefore in my humble opinion this creed might be spared, as being an outwork to a quarter not now liable to attacks, and giving scandal to this enlightened age wherein everybody expects to understand every thing: and I have heard some divines express a wish it were dropped out of our Liturgy.

Nevertheless, while it remains an outwork, we ought not to let the enemy make a lodgment upon it; to prevent which was the design of this Chapter rather than any direct benefit I could expect to do the believer: for the less he concerns himself with particulars upon this matter, the better. I have said it is one of those points remotely fundamental which were made so by circumstances of times, and as things stand at present circumstanced, seems to retain no more of that quality than enough to render a direct opposition the mark of an enemy, but not an actual reception necessary to characterize a friend.

For my part, I am for enlarging the pale of

of orthodoxy as wide as possible without breaking the enclosure, and for that purpose would contract the number of fundamentals, for it is by multiplying them that the walls of partition have been run across, dividing the ground into so many little scanty closes. Therefore if a man inadvertently or in private confidence gives me suspicion that he is not perfectly Athanasian, I can give him the right hand of fellowship, if I have none other reason to withhold it. Nay, further, though I fear it will be thought carrying my Christian charity beyond bounds, if he only esteems the introduction and propagation of Christianity as an event eminently providential, doubting of the supernatural facts recorded, and consults the Scriptures jointly with his own reason in forming his idea of the Supreme Being, the administration of the moral world, his religious sentiments and rules of conduct, still I am inclined to admit him into the brotherhood, provided he leaves other people in quiet to believe as much more as they please, without undervaluing or attempting to puzzle them upon that account. But if he shews a fondness to impugn or ridicule things generally holden sacred, I must regard him as an adversary: and since persons of no Religion delight much in such practices, I may suspect him to be a bad man,

man, but at best shall think him indiscreet, unskilled in human nature, and defective in that regard to order and the public good, which is one of the principal moral duties.

17. The want of distinguishing between essential and remote fundamentals, seems to be the fatal rock upon which both the bigot and freethinker make shipwreck, though they are cast off to opposite sides. The former finds certain institutions, ceremonies, and articles of faith strongly inculcated as necessary to make a true disciple, so he places righteousness wholly in them: orthodoxy with him is all in all, he hunts sermons, sings psalms, and prays literally without ceasing, and becomes righteous overmuch. He sees no difference between the skin and substance of Religion, nor that because the fruit cannot ripen without the skin, therefore, such strict charge is given to preserve it unbroken: so he crams himself with skin to a surfeit, till he has no room for the fruit. He forgets that Christ will disown those who say unto him, Lord, Lord, but do not the Will of the Father: so doing this Will is the sole essential point, and the Lord, Lord, being necessary only for the sake of that, ought to be repeated no oftener than such necessity requires.

On the other hand, the freethinker, ever hasty

hasty and superficial, looks no deeper than the skin, which he very shrewdly discovers can contain no nourishment for the mind: so he perpetually teazes you with childish questions, What Religion is there in forms and ceremonies? what sacredness in one day, or place, more than another? can God eternally reward, or damn a man according as he says Aye or No to a speculative proposition? For it never enters into his shallow pate to reflect that things of no moment in themselves may become highly valuable by their connections, and draw consequences of the utmost importance. What is money good for? you cannot eat it, you cannot drink it, you cannot cloath your back with it, nor warm yourself by it in winter: it is of none other use than to play at chuck, or spin upon a table to please a child, and our forefathers in the infancy of mankind could do very well without it: nevertheless, as the world goes, a competency of it is of necessary use to procure us all other things necessary, and we are forced to teach our children to be careful of the main chance, without which they will inevitably run themselves into distress and misery.

I suppose he would laugh me to scorn if I should say, that faith may have an effect upon the constitution, or that my pulse and digestion

digestion would be ever the worse whatever my opinions were: yet for all that, to use his own favourite verb, I will venture to say that if I should happen to believe arsenic was sugar, it might cost me my life; or if I should lose my faith in exercise, I might pore over metaphysics, till I had brought on a jaundice, and so shorten my days by that heresy; or as this distemper is known to render the sight confused and darken the understanding, I might become a freethinker.

In like manner, how little soever the Athanasian subtilties may add to the stock of useful knowledge, yet if you teach the plain man to regard them as impositions, he will think himself imposed upon in other things too, and practise sobriety and honesty no further than to escape the lash of the law, and censures of the world. For he cannot trace these duties to their natural foundations, nor see their reference to his own interests: he thinks them duties because enjoined in the Gospel, and he reverences the Gospel upon the authority of the Church, standing in no situation to examine other evidences. Therefore, it is too early to deprive him of this channel, till you can find some other way of inspiring him with just sentiments of the relation he stands in to his Creator, and his fellow-creatures.

To

To conclude, though one may easily escape violent extremes, it is very difficult to hit the middle line between a strictness, and looseness of principle; and the more so, because it varies according to times, and circumstances, and persons you have to deal with. Being apprized of this difficulty, we ought to use our best discretion upon all occasions, bearing in mind that there are fundamentals not essential, but made so by their connection with others, partly by human nature, and partly by institution: and to preserve our Christian charity with a great backwardness in thinking hardly or contemptuously of our neighbours for believing either too little, or too much: for in our spiritual as well as our natural food, the same quantity may be too little for one man, which is too much for another.

CHAP. XIV.

REDEMPTION.

THE doctrine of the Redemption, as commonly understood, depends upon that of the Trinity: for the sin of Man, being a wilful disobedience and direct rebellion against God, made

made such a breach upon his authority as no punishment less than eternal could repair; nor could this be remitted without violation of the divine Justice, unless upon some meritorious act sufficient to make amends for the flagrancy of the offence committed. Which act must be performed by Man, because Man, having done the injury, must make the reparation: but he being under the dominion of sin, had not strength to do any thing good, nor if he had, could it have been meritorious, all his services being of justice due to his Creator and supreme Governor; therefore, it was necessary he should be invested with a divine power by an union with God himself, in order to open a passage for mercy. Yet the party offended could not make atonement to himself; so that Man must have remained obnoxious to eternal punishment, if there had not been distinct Persons in the Godhead: one of whom in transcendant love to mankind, being pleased to take our nature upon him, might make adequate satisfaction to the other, for the injury done to divine justice.

There are many objections made against this doctrine, all taken from the grossest sense in which it can be understood: for it is well known, that upon abstruse subjects, the same expressions will convey very various ideas to different

different persons according as they have been formed by nature, or trained by practice for such exercises. But the Freethinker constantly takes his notions upon an article of Religion from the apprehensions of the vulgar, being unable to reach, or unwilling to seek for any more rational construction; and employs what little penetration he has, to find absurdities in them which never occur to the vulgar.

Now if we could dive into the thoughts of our common people, who yet may be very good Christians and as good men as ourselves (for goodness does not consist in strength of parts or depth of understanding,) we should probably find them apprehending that God created Man to fill up the vacant spaces left in heaven by the fallen Angels: but before he would admit him into the sacred mansions, he determined to try whether he would approve himself worthy of them. So he placed him in a garden, where was plenty of all the conveniencies and enjoyments of life, which were given him to make free use of except one tree, which he was forbidden to touch under pain of death. Nevertheless, Man, by the suggestions of the serpent, did eat of that tree, and thereby deservedly provoked the anger of God; who for this height of ingratitude and disobedience, condemned

him to dwell in everlasting flames with that rebellious spirit whose wicked insinuations he had voluntarily chosen to hearken to, rather than pay an easy obedience to one single command of his Maker and Benefactor. But the Son of God, in compassion to mankind, interceded with his Father in their behalf; and that the authority of God might not suffer by letting sin pass with impunity, he condescended to take the human nature upon him, and therein pay the penalty due to divine Justice for the transgressions of Man.

Having thus purchased pardon by the price of his blood, God will grant it for his sake, and upon his intercession: which he never fails to make for such as are members of his body, and it is not fit he should make it for those who refuse to be incorporated thereinto. But the conditions to become a member of Christ are these, to trust in his name, to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, to perform all kind of good offices to their fellow members, which he will esteem as services actually done to himself, and to do good to those who are not of the household of faith, in imitation of their heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine upon the good and upon the evil, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust. For orthodoxy alone will not serve the

the turn: when such as depend wholly upon that apply to him for his intercession in the dreadful distresses of the last day, saying, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? he will say unto them, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I know ye not.

2. Now the vulgar see nothing of the difficulties in this scheme, which the Freethinker has just wit enough to find out, but not enough to avoid by putting a rational construction upon the doctrines delivered. They know that experiment is the proper proof of a man's character, who cannot know himself, nor can any body else tell, whether he be a good or wicked man until put to the trial: nor find any impropriety in imagining God to make trial before he would admit him to an attendance upon his throne in heaven together with the holy Angels. This blot is not hit by the Freethinker, who admits the absolute contingency and self-origin of human action, because by this principle he can claim his shining virtues as entirely his own, not the gift of God in any sense, nor dependent upon motives deriving through a chain of causes from the provisions of Heaven, so he finds no fault with the supposition of God being uncertain how his creatures would be-

have until he had experience of it; he only cavils at the triflingness of the test, being none other than a prohibition against eating a particular sort of apple.

They see nothing unbecoming the divine nature in ascribing anger thereto: for the best of men are angry at wilful disobedience and crying ingratitude, and there are some offences which cannot be pardoned, even by a merciful prince without unhinging the authority of his government. Nor is it unprecedented in the best policied states, that acts of attainder should pass against a whole rebellious race for the delinquency of their ancestor; nor that obstinacy and wickedness should run in the blood from one generation to another.

They see the greatest noblemen have children like themselves, whom they did not make nor create, but who descended from them, and for whom they have a particular fondness by paternal instinct: therefore why might not God have a Son of the same uncreated nature with himself, and be prevailed upon by his importunities to abate of his anger, if a means could be found out to satisfy his justice?

They have a very inaccurate notion of numerical identity, imagining that things different may be made identical by union, seeing as they

they think numberless instances of many substances by being united and incorporated together, becoming one and the same substance: so they make no scruple at the thought of the Son of God taking the human nature upon him by union with a particular man, whereby God and man became one Person, one individual Being.

They can easily apprehend, that this God-man to whom belonged infinite strength and power, might bear the whole weight of punishment inflicted upon the whole human race: thereby fully discharging the debt due to justice, and opening the door for mercy to take her course, without infringing upon the divine authority.

They stagger not at the doctrine of imputed righteousness: for as a man who has voluntarily paid money to the creditor of many persons, has a right to have it carried to the account of such among them as he thinks proper; so the united God and man, having paid the ransom for sin by his sufferings, which were free services to the divine justice he was under no obligation to perform, had a right to have his merits imputed, and intercession avail for the benefit of whomsoever he pleased, and to impose such terms upon the imputation and intercession, as to him seemed good.

3. It

3. It must be owned that this idea of the Redemption has had many absurd and pernicious notions engrafted upon it: the approach to God by intercession has been made a handle for turning our Salvation into a business to be managed by intrigue and interest, and to represent the court of heaven by similitude with the courts of earthly princes, to whom you cannot have access unless by their minister. And because sinful man was unworthy to approach the throne of glory without the intercession of a Mediator, therefore the Son, being of equal glory with the Father, must keep the like distance with all except a few particular favourites, without whose recommendation nobody could be heard; who themselves too were too great to be addressed by the common Christian: so he could obtain nothing without making interest with the priest to pray to the saint to pray to Christ to pray to God for him; and in order to gain favour with these inferior ministers or sub-mediators, he must pay the priest and make offerings to the Saint.

Then the imputation of merit and conditions annexed to obtaining it, left room for a supposal of some persons exceeding the conditions required, and by their extraordinary holiness purchasing more imputed merit than they wanted for themselves: nevertheless,

nevertheless, they might not impute it over to such others as they pleased, but the overplus went into the treasury of the Church, from whence it was to be bought for Money, by any who had a mind to be saved without fulfilling the conditions required of him.

The inability of man to do any thing acceptable to God, the direction to eschew the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the necessity of a constant, lively trust in the Mediator, enjoined to keep the mind vigilant and vigorous in performing the practical conditions annexed, have been made a handle by our modern enthusiasts for running counter to the usages of mankind, for detesting their fellow-creatures as reprobate and abandoned, for placing all in Faith together with lecture-hearing, hymn-singing, ejaculating, alms-giving, austerities, and other means of strengthening it; and believing that the greater sinner a man is, the more glory redounds to the Mediator from saving him, and the higher trust he reposes in him.

But all these are corruptions of Christianity, inventions of crafty or self-conceited persons taking indefatigable pains to throw conceptions into the vulgar which would never have entered their heads. For the natural inference from the doctrine of a Redeemer, God, as well as man, suffering intolerable

lerable pains to expiate for sin, imposing as conditions of his intercession a resistance of the world, the flesh, and the devil, an unreserved good will and labour of love towards all fellow members of the same spiritual body, and extended beyond them to enemies and persecutors, is none other, than that sin excludes from God and happiness, that using all our might to escape every commission of it, is the only way to bring ourselves within the verge of that deliverance worked for us from the guilt already lying upon our heads: that God is inflexibly just, and though infinitely merciful, yet mercy cannot be had unless by means that will bring it reconcilable with justice.

Can the Redeemer who condescended to take upon him the form of a servant, to preach to the poor, to converse with publicans and sinners; can he be thought to take such state upon him, as that a poor man cannot approach him without making interest by his ministers and favourites? Can he, who is God everlasting, be ignorant of our thoughts, or not know our necessities better than any saint or priest can tell him? Can he, who freely and without asking, laid down his life a ransom for many, need the recommendation of his courtiers, or pressing importunities of his virgin mother, to obtain his intercession

with

with the Father for blessings, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask? Can he, who sought not his own glory but the glory of him that sent him, be grown fond of praise and incessant adoration for the pleasure of receiving them; and not rather exact a strong and steady attachment to his name, solely as a means of keeping his disciples observant of the other conditions he has required of them? Can he, who bore such heavy weight of punishment to expiate for sin, be ever reconciled to the practice of it; or suffer any psalm-singing, sermon-hunting, ejaculating, or pious fervours, which are but a breath of air or turn of thought, to commute for the absolute renunciation of it? Can he who died for all mankind, for enemies and rebels to the Father and the Godhead, be content with a narrow, selfish temper for the sake of passionate zeal for his name; with omission in the duties of our station; with negligence in improving or applying our talents to the temporal as well as spiritual benefit of the community; with religious vanity, censoriousness, arrogance, affected hypocritical humility, or exultant rejoicing at the damnation of reprobates?

4. Notwithstanding all the strong and repeated injunctions to faith, and trust, and dependence on the Redeemer, we are positively told

told it is not saying, Lord, Lord, but doing the Will of the Father that will entitle a person to his share in the intercession. But God wants nothing and can receive nothing from us for himself: therefore his Will can be none other than the happiness of his creatures with whom we have intercourse, among whom our own persons are included; and every contravention of that Will is properly to be understood by the word Sin. But happiness consists in a constant serenity and satisfaction of mind, which can only be ensured by a just sense of the divine Power, Providence, and Attributes; and in those externals contributing to the convenience and enjoyment of life, which can only be procured by the mutual endeavours of mankind assisting one another, each in his several station. But we are obstructed in the prosecution of our own and the general interest, by our attachment to present pleasure and our inordinate desires, by the torrent of evil custom prompting us to covetousness, ambition, vanity, and the like, by selfishness, envy, contention and malice; styled in religious language the flesh, the world, and the devil.

Thus it appears the doctrine of Redemption has none other scope than to bring appetite and passion under the dominion of reason,

reason, that we may never fall into sin; that is, never indulge any fond humour or evil habit against what we know in our reason and our conscience to be right, nor neglect our rules of conduct for pursuing our own advantages, or the good of our fellow-creatures, to whom at any time we are capable of doing service; in both cases preferring the more important service before the less: which is the very point whereto Philosophy, if it be good for any thing, ought to bring men.

Therefore, as I have said before in another place, I see no difference between a true member of Christ and a good citizen of the world, other than in their method of attaining these characters. If once compleat in them, both would proceed upon the same plan, a judicious, diligent, unreserved endeavour to promote happiness, as well of body as mind, in themselves and others, in the community and private persons, in friends, strangers, and enemies, in any subject wherever they can; and to bring appetite and desire of every kind obedient to the dictates of understanding.

This the Rationalist thinks he can compass by his own management: if he can, it is very well; he does the Will of the Father, and will be prepared to say, Lord, Lord, in an acceptable manner the moment he shall see convincing

convincing proofs of its being necessary: but he ought to be well assured he can find his own way, before he rejects the offer of assistance.

To such as are conscious they cannot attain this perfection by their own industry, the persuasion of a Redeemer, and those religious exercises which fix their attachment to him become fundamentals, without which they cannot be saved either from sin or the fatal consequences of it: therefore every omission of these exercises and whatever weakens their attachment, is sin likewise, because leading into that which was essentially so. But these sins being made such by their reference to others, their opposite duties too derive their value from a connection with the practical duties whereto they necessarily lead, and consequently cease to be duties whenever that connection is wanting. Therefore it behoves us to examine the tendency of our religious sentiments and exercises, and attentively to observe what effect they have upon our conduct; without which we shall fall into such as are spurious in kind, or extravagant in degree.

If our faith in the Redeemer represents him as indulgent to the vices of his worshippers, or covetous of a zealous attachment to his name for its own sake, or for any other

cause

cause than as a means of promoting the happiness of his members: if our acts of devotion tend to make ourselves or others uneasy, desponding, melancholy, superstitious and censorious; or draw us off from the improvement of our talents, from the duties of our station, or render us less useful members of the community: they are sinful instead of being pious, they are delusions of the wicked one, rather than works of the Spirit. For God is all goodness and mercy and loving-kindness, therefore the happiness of his creatures must be his grand design: nor can we ever serve him well, unless by serving as his instruments in promoting his blessed purpose.

Our future happiness is indeed incomparably more valuable than our present: but our gracious God, who is Lord of both worlds has pleased so to connect the interests of them both, as that we have no surer way to future happiness than by advancing that of the world wherein we live. The case may sometimes so happen, as that the road of duty shall lie through private damage, through labour, pain, distress, uneasiness, affliction, and persecution: but whatever such action does not tend nearly or remotely to the greater benefit of mankind, either in promoting the order and peace of society, the

necessaries

necessaries and conveniencies of life, the advancement of useful knowledge, accomplishment and virtue, or encouragement of a happy temper of mind which avails more than all the rest to present happiness, may be pronounced a folly, rather than a service to the Redeemer, or a doing the Will of the Father.

It cannot be expected that every common Christian should be able always to trace the tendency of his actions, therefore he is excusable in following his rules; if those who gave them have misguided him, the fault lies at their door, besides, the duties of men are various, such, as being not engaged in active life can do good no otherwise than by setting examples of piety and regularity, ought to practise a little more strictness than is needful for others. Yet it is dangerous trusting to human guidance implicitly; every man has some judgment of his own, and his Redeemer will expect he should improve every talent entrusted with him to the utmost, be it ever so small; therefore let him use what judgment he has, to discover the real good of the world, or those of its inhabitants whom his conduct may affect: he may still fall into some excusable indiscretions, but will avoid the sin of being righteous overmuch, that is, indulging an intemperance of zeal, a religious passion

passion, covered under the appearance of extraordinary righteousness.

5. Nevertheless, these ideas, though sitting easy upon the ordinary Christian, and affording him excellent nourishment, may lie heavy upon the digestion of the reasoner, how well soever disposed to receive instruction where conveyed to him in a manner not harsh, nor nauseating to his palate. He may be apt to boggle at the notion of God omniscient needing to try the works of his hands before he could know how they were qualified, at irremissible punishment, at damages sustained by the Almighty, at a price paid to compensate them in value, at original sin, suffering by substitute, God undergoing punishment, and imputation of righteousness: Let us try then whether, by help of what has been offered in the former part of this work concerning the divine Attributes and administration of the moral world, we can understand the orthodox scheme of the Redemption, in a sense that shall make it appear reconcileable with the discoveries of reason.

We have found that all events throughout the universe proceed from causes derived originally from the Almighty, so that nothing happens any where, unless by his permission or appointment. We know by undoubted experience there is a mixture of evil in nature.

ture, and we may gather from the goodness of God, that his view never terminates upon evil, but he sends it always as a necessary means to work out some greater good: what makes this necessity, or how the sufferings of one species of creatures operate to the good of others, we may conjecture but cannot ascertain, but that it is necessary we may rest assured, because else it would be totally removed. Nor is it impossible the same quantity of evil may be always necessary, and may pass in rotation among the creatures: so there is no absurdity in supposing one delivered by the sufferings of another taking upon him this severe burden of public service, which must constantly be performed by somebody: as a sentinel is released from the inclemencies of a stormy night by a other being sent to relieve him.

We have taken notice of an ancient opinion, embraced by many and countenanced by the Sacred Writings, that all natural evil was the consequence of moral; and have attempted to trace their progress by ignorance and imbecillity leading into wilful offence, and this drawing on punishment: so that all suffering is punitory, not inflicted immediately by the hand of God, but following by natural consequence from misbehaviour of the creatures, nor was there more

reason

reason against subjecting the race of men to this ignorance and imbecility, which must fall somewhere for the necessary purposes of the Universe, than any other set of creatures.

As all things proceed from the provisions of God whose knowledge is infinite, we cannot suppose him ignorant of any consequence to result from the provisions he made: therefore the trial he put Adam to in the garden was not needful for his own satisfaction, the issue being certain before the trial was made: and herein we are supported by the sacred text, wherein Christ is called the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world. But though the slaying could be only in designation, yet neither could it be designed before the want of it was known; nor could that be prior to the knowledge of Adam's fault, which consequently was foreseen before the foundations of the world.

Nor need we understand the trial to be that of a malefactor tried, convicted, and condemned, for the crimes he has committed; but that made by the master of the mint, when he tries and condemns a large mass of metal as below the standard, upon assaying a little piece of it. For the supposition of our being punished for the offence of our primogenitor, or becoming actual delinquents by his transgression, has constantly proved a

stumbling block which human reason could never get over: but we can easily apprehend that any one man may stand as a representative of all the rest, and by his conduct it might be tried what all other men would do in the like situation: for our actions follow precisely upon the ideas and motives present to our imagination.

We commonly impute our several vices to some defect of constitution, or bad education, or evil company, or external accident: but the assay made upon Adam manifested what human nature was, and proved a condemnation of the whole race by shewing that a man placed in the most favourable situation of circumstances possible, would yet be overcome by the first temptation assailing him. Thus we bring into the world with us an original sin, by which I do not understand an actual guilt, but a certain propensity to contract it upon occasion offered: and so are born children of perdition, not as involved in it already, but because fallen into a road that will lead inevitably thereinto.

This life being a preparation for the next stage of Being, the new inhabitants must enter thereinto diversely conditioned and qualified, according to the state of vital union with body they have passed through: but sinfulness, being the portion of human nature,

nature, must accompany every one who has partaken of that nature, and consequently children dying immediately after birth without commission of actual sin, must be borne down with the weight of original sin, or rather the natural inability to resist temptation, which was evidenced by Adam's misdemeanor. For we have found it probable in a former place, that future punishment is not inflicted immediately for crimes committed here, but they fix such a taint upon the soul as will prompt it to commit greater crimes hereafter, and so to perpetuate the punishment by perpetuating offences. Therefore that state of natural weakness which inevitably draws on offences, may without impropriety be styled a state of perdition: just as if you saw a man of too easy temper, who could not say no to any body going to live among a company of debauchees, you would give him over for lost, though you had never yet known him guilty of any actual debauchery.

6. We have seen in the Chapter on Equality that the divine Equity ensures to every creature a proportionable share in the treasures of happiness flowing among them from the divine Bounty, and that what mixture of evil is interspersed therein shall likewise be shared equally among them all, either by a rotation of natural suffering, or by a retard-

ment or abatement of happiness: and in the Chapter on Providence, that God being Lord and Author of universal nature, wanted not power nor wisdom to contrive his plan so, as that the rotation between good and evil, and equal distribution of both, should be brought about by natural causes: yet that it was not incongruous with reason to imagine he might have interwoven his own immediate acts of omnipotence into his plan, so that the operations of second causes, being a part only of the plans should fall defective of his purpose, unless compleated by his own interpositions, predetermined, before the foundations of the world.

Upon this supposition, there is no difficulty in apprehending that human nature might be so framed, as by continual repetition of offence, to draw on a perpetuity of punishment; at least a greater length and degree of Aionian punishment, than fell to the share of any creatures: God in his Equity and infinite Mercy having purposed to supply this imperfection in his second causes, by acting himself in his filial character to rectify them. The Mundane Soul, or host of Angels, or disembodied Spirits having a full view of all nature, must see that by this disposition of second causes, Equity was violated; they knew this Attribute would right itself again some-

somehow or other, but in what manner they could not tell, not being able to penetrate the secret counsels of God, nor inspect that part of his plan containing his own interpositions, therefore this was the mystery which they desired, or, as the Greek word imports, stooped earnestly down to look into.

In the Chapter on divine Justice, and the article of Demerit in the Chapter on Freewill, it has been made appear, that there is no essential nor immediate connection between offence and punishment; the connection is made by the medium of expedience; punishment being due, not strictly for the past delinquency, which cannot be undone, but for prevention of future mischief, or for attaining some benefit greater than the evil of the suffering: while this medium remains, Justice must proceed her course: whenever it can be removed, Mercy will take place. If then the sufferings of Man were of necessary advantage to the creation, the payment of that penalty was a thing of value, which God would exact as a debt due to his Justice; nor could remit without a compensation equal in value, not to himself, for he could neither be endamaged nor made amends, but to his subjects. Therefore we must conclude, that the voluntary sufferings of the Redeemer, answering the same purpose which would

have

have been effected by the sufferings of Man, rendered the latter needless, and opened the door for mercy: and in this light may justly be styled a ransom for sin, a valuable consideration paid for the purchase of pardon.

7. We know so little of the relation we stand in to the invisible world, that it would be in vain to conjecture what particular advantages might have accrued thereto from our punishment, and consequently in what manner the compensation operated to the same effect. But we may know that with respect to ourselves, it tends to encrease our abhorrence and dread of sin, which infinite Mercy could not remit without an amends we are not able to make ourselves, and have no room to expect will be made for us again, if we incur the penalty a second time.

As to the thing done in compensation, we may gather from the Sacred Writings, it was nothing else than a constant, uninterrupted adherence to rectitude of conduct against all temptations whatsoever; for Jesus was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted: and because extreme pain, uneasiness, and desperation, are the hardest attacks for human nature to resist, therefore he is said to have paid the ransom upon the cross; not but that we may allow his holy life to have been a part of the payment. Thus upon examining in what

what species of coin the ransom was paid, we find it to have been a perpetual course of virtue and right action, an absolute dominion of reason over the inferior faculties, an effectual resistance of all pleasure, indulgence, desire, pain, terror, and other uneasinesses. For the plan of universal nature having been so drawn as that the self-denials, disappointments, and sufferings of human creatures, were made of necessary use to other Beings, they could not be remitted without breaking the law of nature, and endamaging the creation: therefore all that could be done for man was, to draw out the sting of them, and render them no evils, by enduing him with a vigour of mind capable to bear them willingly.

If it be thought absurd to imagine, that evil can be turned into a thing indifferent by any disposition of mind whatever, I may keep myself in countenance by the authority of the ancient philosophers, particularly the Stoics, who strongly maintained that pain was no evil, but made so by opinion, that is, by the weakness of our mind: and we see their theory frequently confirmed by experience, for none of us but can bear little disappointments, vexations, and pains, without being hurt by them; and this not by insensibility, for we perceive the displeasure and feel

feel the smart; but suffer no diminution thereby in our present enjoyment and satisfaction of mind. Therefore they insisted that virtue, or rectitude, or wisdom, for these were synonymous terms, was the only sure way to happiness, and that the Wise-man must be always invariably happy beyond the power of fortune to hurt him.

But though right in theory they were romantic in expecting to see it verified in practice, or laying it down for an indispensable rule of conduct: for most of us can bear little self-denials and pains, and some of us pretty severe ones of one particular kind; the soldier can endure wounds; the student, labours of thought; the ploughman, labours of body; the nurse, watchings; the surgeon, nastiness; but none can bear evils of all sorts and degrees of intenseness without suffering cruelly by them; for human nature is unequal to the task. But this height of perfection which nature cannot reach, it may be raised to by divine interposition: and the man Jesus having this interposition to assist him continually, might actually be that Wise-man which the philosophers sought in vain, and which was nowhere else to be found but in imagination.

8. Therefore the office performed by God in his second Persona or character of the Son, was to invigorate the human soul of Jesus,

Jesus, that his understanding might never be overpowered by appetite, or passion, or any impulse of imagination whatever, but constantly have the determination of his will in every single instance; being supplied perpetually by the divine agency with what was wanting to the natural strength of man, and to make a whole life of rectitude compleat, it was necessary the divine agency should begin to operate early.

We commonly reckon children do not arrive at the use of reason, nor the capacity of good and evil, until seven years old, because we cannot discern any thing of a moral character appearing in their actions before: but we know not what imperceptible misconduct they may have fallen into sooner, nor how early it may be needful to strengthen the growing faculty to prepare it for a vigorous maturity: we may presume the preparation cannot be made too early. Therefore the filial character accompanied the Soul of Jesus from his birth, and he grew in grace and wisdom in proportion to the growing powers it had to govern, and opposition it had to contend with.

But this wisdom was moral wisdom, of which I have elsewhere given mine idea distinguishing it from natural wisdom: it is rather a vigour than capaciousness of understanding;

standing; the same as the virtue of Prudence; weighed more with the greater good and the rules of duty pointing thereto than with present pleasure or ease. For prudence does not consist in sagacity nor extent of knowledge: he that knows much but makes no use of it, is the more imprudent upon that account, and he is the most prudent man who makes the best profit of his knowledge, be it ever so small.

The world in general lies under great mistakes upon this article; they see only the outward action, so judge of the character by the greatness of the exploits performed: whereas a man of uncommon abilities may do great things with a very little share of virtue, perhaps with none at all, by help of vanity, ambition, or the desire of excelling. Your writers of Romance give their heroes an immense estate, irresistible strength, exuberant health, constitutional intrepidity, penetration, and extraordinary brightness of parts: never reflecting that with all these advantages one might work wonders without being a hero. To make him truly such, they ought to describe him doing more than common with only common endowments: nor could we with certainty pronounce any man a compleat hero, unless we knew he had done all that could be done with the powers

and

and opportunities put into his hands. For the actions of wisdom must be such as lie in every one's power: there is a rule of rectitude for the porter, the cobler, the nurse, and the savage, as well as for the prince, the politician, the general, and the philosopher; and whoever could persevere in it invariably, would be equally a wise-man in every station.

This being the case, it was fitting the divine power should not be joined with extraordinary endowments of body and mind, lest the effects of them should be confounded with the fruits of moral wisdom: therefore, the filial character was united to an illiterate carpenter, who we need not imagine gained more knowledge thereby in mathematics, astronomy, geography, policy, metaphysics, or other sciences, than any common carpenter might have attained, if we could suppose him never once to have neglected the improvement of his talents. What supernatural knowledge he had was imparted to him, and the wonders he worked were performed by the Father, in the same manner as those of Moses and the prophets.

9. By the help of what has been argued in the two foregoing sections, we may remove the grand stumbling block of a suffering God; for we have seen the efficacy of moral wisdom when compleat, to render the mind

mind proof against every evil, so that it might voluntarily endure an extremity of torment without suffering by it. Therefore we need not try to make subtile distinctions between the divine and human natures, to show that one might suffer when the other did not: for neither the united Christ, nor the man Jesus thus divinely supported, was in a state of evil or unhappiness in the very moment of his greatest agonies.

Perhaps it will be thought lessening our obligation to the Saviour, to suppose him effecting our Redemption without hurt to himself, and representing it as an act of prudence, which his wisdom must show him was expedient for his own sake, no less than for the sake of his fellow-members; for Jesus had a soul to be saved as well as we, and he did save it together with ours.

To this objection I shall answer in the first place; that I am justified in this representation by the writer to the Hebrews, who tells us that Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross despising the shame, that is, he acted for his own interest jointly with ours. In the next place, to go upon the footing of human reason, let us recollect what has been said in two Chapters of the first Volume, on the ultimate Good and on Benevolence, and in several other places; wherein

wherein it has been shown from the survey of human nature, that each man's own happiness is his proper end of action which he ought invariably to pursue in every part of his conduct; and that benevolence was nothing else than a placing his happiness in the good of others, or rather a lively, firm persuasion of his own interest being inseparably connected with the general: therefore, where a man has this persuasion, he is as sincere and hearty in the services he does to another, as in any prudential measures he takes for his own private interest, and his benevolence is of the right genuine stamp.

But, you will say, if he endure great labour and pain, and sustain damage for another's benefit, the obligation is greater, than if he could do it with ease and at no expense to himself. It may be so: yet if he can support the trouble, the pain, and the damage chearfully, it proves the glow of his kindness the ferventer, and consequently heightens the obligation and the endearment to such, as are sensible what it is that supports him. For why should we desire to have those that serve us suffer in the performance? It is unnatural for a man knowingly and voluntarily to make himself unhappy; or if he could do it, how should we be the better than if he performed the same

same services without being unhappy? Could we model the dispositions of persons about us with a wish, what could we wish more for our advantage than that they should esteem our interests thier own, and take a real pleasure in undergoing the severest trials for our sakes? Honour is there most merited, where it can be most usefully placed, therefore, those arduous exercises of virtue are most laudable and meritorious, which are performed most chearfully, because they will be done most effectually; for a man can never go through his work well, so long as it is irksome to him.

It would be impious to imagine the organs of Jesus rendered insensible, or that he did not feel the same weight of anguish, disgrace, and agony of despair, when he cried out; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? as any of us should have done in the like situation; but that weight was overbalanced by the contemplation of his own interest being involved in that of the creation, and by the joy of opening a passage, whereby all mankind might arrive at the like tranquillity of mind under the severest pressures.

10. This brings me to enquire, in what manner the sufferings of the Redeemer operated to our benefit: and I apprehend it to have been, not by taking off any service we were

were destined to perform for the universe, for this would be sacrificing the general interest to the advantage of a few: nor by working a change in the constitution of human nature, for this would look like something of a charm and magic; nor yet by turning the purposes of God from resentment into mercy, for this would be to represent him liable to passion and mutability: but by setting an example which might lead us into the method of performing the hardest of our services with the same tranquillity and satisfaction of mind that he did.

We know the force of sympathy, and how much example is more prevalent than precept: a coward may face dangers and despise wounds in company of the brave, that had made him shudder in the apprehension, while alone. We know what incredible tortures the first disciples were enabled to endure by continual contemplation of their Master's example, and their assiduity in those devotions and institutions, which contributed to fix such contemplation more strongly upon their minds. It is likely Eve would have resisted the temptation, had there been another woman to have rejected the apple with scorn in her presence. Plato tells us, Virtue is so beautiful that if we could once see her unveiled, we should be so enamoured of her charms,

charms, as to despise all things else in comparison with her: so there wanted only one perfect Wise-man, in whose actions she might stand visible to view, to bring all others into admiration of Wisdom, by showing its efficacy to turn pain into ease, and render the soul proof against all evil and unhappiness.

Therefore we are not to imagine our ransom so fully paid, as that there is nothing left for us to pay: we are captives still, but have the key put into our hands that will unlock the padlocks of our chains, so we must use the key to effect our deliverance; nor has Christ so saved us, but that we must still work out our own salvation, in such fear and trembling as is consistent with a confidence of success. The lawyers make a distinction between an obligation rendered void, or only voidable: both which in common acceptation are reckoned much the same, but I conceive it very material to preserve in mind the like distinction here, though we need not always express it in our discourses, nor do I apprehend it heterodox to say, that we are not yet actually redeemed, but only made redeemable. The hand-writing against us is not blotted out, yet it may well be termed so, because we have a sponge given us to wipe it away ourselves. The debt is not discharged, but a die is out for us by which

which we may stamp the current coin wherewith to discharge it fully. The imitation then of our grand exemplar is the one thing needful for our deliverance, which must be worked out by stamping upon our minds that character of moral wisdom which secured him continually against the approach of evil and misery: and until we can compass that, our redemption remains incompleat.

11. From hence we may see the imputation of righteousness, the mediation and intercession for sinners still continuing such, are only figurative expressions, to denote that we derive our righteousness from Christ, and are enabled by the medium of his example and aids, to fulfil the laws of nature, which were impracticable by us before. Yet still the righteousness must be actually derived to ourselves and become our own, before it can be imputed to us: and though he has rendered the way passable by going before us, we must travel it after him with our own feet, or shall never arrive at our journey's end; we may expect to be helped forward, but not carried for any the most pressing, repeated importunities whatever. Therefore, our trust, our devotion, and our religious exercises, will not commute for the want of that righteousness which is the sole operating cause of our salvation, and which we may now attain by

derivation from him: nor are they of any other avail, than for the effect they may have upon ourselves towards generating in us the like moral wisdom, as exemplified by our leader, in the ready resistance of pleasure, desire, and temptation, and unreluctant endurance of the severest trials.

The sum of our imitation then, and the substance of our duty, is the same with what was comprised by the old philosophers in two words, BEAR and FORBEAR: but they could only tell us what would make for our good, whereas he has set us an example, and prescribed institutions and methods, whereby we may learn to bear and forbear with content and satisfaction to ourselves. For he proclaims to us, Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; for my yoke is easy and my burden light: he has made it so, not by taking off the weight, but by inuring our shoulders to bear it without galling. Thus Christianity makes no alteration in the ultimate end of action, each man's own happiness remains still his proper aim.

But there are two roads to happiness, gratification, pleasure, ease, or whatever else you will call it; one by procuring the objects of desire, the other by bringing desire to the objects at hand, or which conduce most

most largely to our future advantage. The former we are ready enough to pursue of our own accord: the latter our Redeemer has made passable for us, and taught us to walk in. Therefore, happiness, enjoyment, and ease of heart, being still our proper point of pursuit, it is a spurious piety, a preposterous perversion of his doctrine, to teach men that they merit heaven by voluntary austerities, self-denials, mortifications, and afflicting themselves: for these things are abhorrent to nature, of no intrinsic worth or obligation, nor of any value unless when necessary to work out some greater advantage, either discerned by ourselves, or evidenced to us by rules received from those who know better. We are enjoined indeed to deny ourselves, to subdue our passions, to mortify the flesh, to undergo toils and labours; but then it is in order to prevent their being troublesome to us, and proving a hinderance in the prosecution of our truest interests, and to inure us gradually by practice to a firmness of mind we cannot assume at once: yet the sooner we can attain it, with the less regret and trouble to ourselves we can enter upon the progress, the better it is, and the more acceptable.

Thus in the very exercise of self-denial, we are striving for our future enjoyment, and

may laudably strive for our present ease and satisfaction in the manner of supporting it. We are commanded to take up our cross and follow our leader, we are not commanded to make crosses for ourselves, but take them willingly when cast in our way by the courses of Providence, for so did our leader: he did not make his own cross, nor gratuitously cause himself to be nailed to it; he came eating and drinking, conversed with a chearful serenity among publicans and sinners, assisted to promote the innocent mirth of a wedding, practised no self-imposed austerities, penances, and abstinences; for when he went up into the wilderness, he went not up by choice, but was led of the Spirit; that is, by some secret intimation of its expedience; while allowable he avoided the persecution of the Jews, and at last prayed that the cup might pass from him, but concluding, Nevertheless, not my Will be done, but thine, O Father. Thus, if we will follow him, obedience to the dispensations of Providence is our road, we must not pretend to voluntary services nor meritorious performances; we are to do the Will of the Father, not our own Will, nor may chuse for ourselves even in the most arduous and perilous undertakings; any more than a soldier quartered in the Capital,

in

in ease, security, and plenty, may desert his colours to join a corps going abroad upon a dangerous expedition.

But our Father is not a severe, cruel task-master, but a gracious, indulgent parent: he has showered down his blessings of all kinds in abundance upon earth, on purpose that we should enjoy them with thankfulness, and spread and improve them among our fellow-creatures, where it can be done innocently without future detriment. He best knows what abstinences and hard trials to call us to, and when such services will be real services to his creation: it is our business to keep a watchful eye upon the rules of duty and expedience, to hold ourselves in readiness to obey the call, and to take up whatever cross is thrown before us, looking up to the pattern that is set before us, and trusting for the promised assistance of the Comforter, if necessary, for effectuating our endeavours to bear it without galling; still searching about for any lawful means of avoiding it, but concluding with a sincere and willing resignation, Nevertheless, not our Will be done, but thine, O Father.

And I apprehend this may serve as a clue for understanding many texts of Scripture which seem hard of digestion; such as selling all our goods to give to the poor, turning the left

left cheek to him that has smitten the right, hating father and mother, wife and children, and the like which are not to be taken for rules of conduct for us to practise, but directions what temper and firmness of mind we are to put on, enabling us to perform things the most reluctant to human nature, whenever the Will of the Father, manifested by particular situation of circumstance, that is whenever necessity or duty shall so require.

12. Perhaps I shall be thought too rigorous in describing the righteousness which is to be the sole operating cause of our salvation; such perfect ungrudging resistance both of pleasure and pain, as above supposed to constitute it, being impracticable: but if we weigh the matter impartially without suffering ourself-fondness to cast its weight of prejudice into the scale, we shall find nothing less can suffice effectually for our purpose. Our Redeemer requires it, for he enjoins us to take up our cross and follow him, to die unto the world, to crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof. The voice of heathen philosophy requires it, for that declares happiness reserved only for the Wise-man, who becomes such by a total Apathy: by which is not to be understood an utter insensibility, a want of all affection or preference of one thing above another; but an exemption from all passion

passion or perturbation, a fixed tranquillity of mind not to be thrown off the seat by any allurement, or cross accident, or terror whatsoever.

But this is a voice only; informing us where lies our goal, and leaving us to get to it as well as we can: whereas the Redeemer leads on the way by his example, prescribes certain methods for bringing us into breath, and assists us by the promised Comforter to invigorate our efforts: and ecclesiastical history testifies what almost incredible achievements have been performed with these aids. Nevertheless with all these aids the work has not yet been compleatly perfected; for still there is none that doeth good, no not one, the very best have their failings, and the most obedient feel the yoke sometimes galling to their shoulders: from whence it seems to follow, there is something remaining to be done in the other world: and the probability of room being left there for compleating the work of Redemption, may be gathered from several considerations.

If I do not egregiously mistake the doctrines of our Church, I may lay down that the sacrifice of Christ was offered for the whole human race, without exception of times, places, or persons; nevertheless, that no man can reap the benefit of it without a particular

ticular application of it to himself by faith in the Redeemer. It is not here the place to examine what we are to understand by a saving Faith: this shall be reserved for the next Chapter. We need only now observe, that it must be an act of the Will, or rather a habit acquired by our own industry: so that no one of all the sons of Adam will miss his share of the Redemption purchased, unless by his own fault. Yet what multitudes of Adam's sons have passed off this earthly stage in the four thousand years before Christ appeared!

It may be said that they had the promise of him that was to come: but how did they understand the promises? I will not pretend to say what might be the thoughts of some very few of the most enlightened, but it is well known the Jews in general expected a temporal deliverer; and though they spoke of a redemption from sin, they meant thereby a deliverance from the distresses fallen upon them for their past sins, not a rescue from the dominion of sin for the future. The apostles themselves retained the same notion to the last of their Master's conversing among them; for when at Emmaus they related the story of the crucifixion, they concluded with this reflection, but we trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel: they were so

far

far from having a right understanding of the word, nor knew that the price of their ransom was then actually paid.

But allowing as largely as you please to the chosen people, how small a part were they of mankind! the rest of whom never heard of the promises. And since the promulgation of Christianity, there are many nations of Mahometans, heathens, and savages, where the sound of it has not been heard, or been lost again from among them. Add to this that in the midst of Christendom there are multitudes of children who never arrive at a capacity of actually applying the benefits of the Redemption to themselves: many grown persons bred up in ignorance and error, who never had an opportunity of attaining a just notion of it: and when we reflect how grievously our Religion has been perverted and corrupted by some of its most zealous votaries, there may have been men of serious thought and sober judgment, who without their own fault, having taken their estimate of it from these disguises, were excusable in rejecting it, and stand in the case of such as never heard of it. If then Christ died for all men, and none can fail of receiving the benefits he purchased for them without their own wilful negligence: all those above mentioned, who have had no fair opportunity

of

of embracing his gracious offer, must be afforded it elsewhere.

And to convince us that it has been afforded elsewhere, let us recollect the principal and most authentic of our Creeds, called the Apostles, wherein is an article, that Jesus Christ, the only Son our Lord, descended into hell. What can we understand by this descent of the united Christ into hell or the region of departed souls, unless that he continued to act there in his filial character upon the human soul of Jesus? But was this agency continued for nothing? or whatever else be meant by the descent, was it made for no purpose? and what other purpose can be conceived more worthy, than for compleating those benefits of the Redemption worked here, which could not be conveyed perfectly upon earth.

Then if we consider the finer and smaller composition of a vehicular or spiritual body, bearing a nearer proportion to the sphere of the spirit's presence than our present gross bodies, which we move by long strings of complicated engines, wherein are many mechanical motions interfering with our voluntary, and not to be corrected by them without much labour and practice; it will appear probable they are much more manageable, and that the force of example with our

endeavours

endeavours to apply it, may operate more strongly to work new habits; especially if there should be such a sentient language as suggested in the Vision, whereby the very ideas passing in our Pattern might be conveyed more exactly and fully than can be done here through any of our senses.

This greater suppleness of the vehicular nature above the gross corporeal, may account for the shortness of the Redeemer's continuance among them: for as much might be done in a day and a half there as required three years and a half's ministry here. And as upon earth he left his Apostles to transmit the benefits of his life and passion by their successors to the latest posterity; so by his example in the Hades, he may have led some of the vehicular inhabitants into such perfect habit of endurance and forbearance, as that they might serve for examples to all others of the human race, who were disposed to take the benefit of them.

13. No doubt this will be counted a novel doctrine, but novelty alone is no more a sufficient ground of rejecting than receiving a thing: the cause must be tried at the bar of sober reason and sincere piety, and I leave it to the consideration of every man who is not afraid to entertain a thought, even to the honour of the Divine Goodness and Equity, that

that was not taught him by his school-master; whether it does not necessarily follow from the article of an universal Redemption, purchased for all who do not wilfully refuse or neglect to embrace it, compared with the experience of multitudes passing off this worldly stage without any possibility of embracing it.

Yet there is a very pernicious consequence may be drawn by some who are too ready to turn every thing into a handle for indulging their vicious appetites, which I must be careful to obviate. We see men wonderfully prone to procrastination: they put off their repentance from day to day till the hour of death, and will put it off then too, if taught to expect another opportunity afterwards. But they have no just room to infer from any thing suggested above, that they shall ever have another: the Scriptures so expressly declare our condition in the next life dependant upon our conduct here, that nothing but the absolute necessity of solving the impartiality of our Maker and of our Redeemer, could warrant us to imagine, that an opportunity shall be given hereafter to such as had none afforded them here; or a further space allowed ourselves to run the rest of our race, which with our utmost endeavours and best application of our aids, we are not able to finish

finish in the body. But with respect to us who have had a part of our course marked out to us upon earth, if we neglect to run so much as we can, the necessity ceases; for the divine Justice stands approved in having once made us the offer, nor can we expect ever to be admitted upon the lists a second time; therefore it still remains true, that as the tree falls so it lies.

Children called away before they came to the knowledge of good and evil, have never had their tree of choice and judgment grow at all: so it cannot yet have fallen any where. Heathens, savages, persons brought up from their infancy in ignorance, wickedness, delusion, and error, or who have had our Religion presented to them under such disguises as made it appear hideous to common sense and honest reason, have yet had some sparks of conscience twinkling in their breasts: and according as they improved by these, their tree lies in a disposition to be transplanted into another soil, where they may cultivate it to the bearing of salutary fruits. But the tree that with the benefit of their sunshine and watering, still continues barren, must have contracted a canker by ill management; and can never flourish again transplanted into any soil, but is fit for nothing else than to be cut down and cast into the fire.

As

As there is a constant communication of action between the grosser and finer parts of our composition, it is not improbable, even upon the contemplation of human nature, that vice may work such a foulness into the spiritual body, as will destroy that suppleness and pliancy to the command of the purely spiritual part wherein its health consists, and thereby render it incapable of receiving benefit from any examples or aids whatever which may be afforded.

14. Thus there is good room for Christian charity to hope, that although none can be saved unless through Christ, yet many may be saved who, during their abode upon earth, never were in him: for he may have other sheep which are not yet brought into the fold, some to whom it has never yet been opened, and other stragglers because they have never heard or never understood the call. And the same charity will extend the pale of salvation to take in all the various sects of Christians: for our judgments depend upon our natural temperament, our education, the company we have conversed amongst, the examples we have seen, and the manner wherein subjects have been proposed to us; therefore different persons, of the most unbiassed sincerity and honest industry, will judge variously upon the same points;

points; but if they carefully live up to the best lights afforded them by the dispensations of Providence ordinary and extraordinary, they cannot be ranked under the class of those, who wilfully neglect to embrace the Redemption offered. Nevertheless, we are not to imagine it an indifferent thing what sect or what religion we list ourselves into: for how much soever men may be saved in all, there is but one only religion and sect for each particular man wherein he can walk securely.

And this may serve to expound the doctrine of the straight-gate; for straight is the gate and narrow is the way by which each particular man may pass into life; if he deviates into the broad road among the multitudes, he will find his journey end in destruction; nevertheless those multitudes may have their several narrow paths and their wickets through which, if they persevere in their way, they may find entrance though he could not. For we must understand every thing in Scripture with a reference to our use and our conduct, not to empty speculation.

The question, Are there many that shall be saved, was probably a matter of mere curiosity, but the answer turned it to a more important purpose: which we can least of all imagine to be for nourishing our spiritual pride,

pride, and justifying our ill nature in exulting at the damnation of multitudes; we ought rather to take it as an alarm to our carelessness and spur to our indolence. Strive to enter at the straight-gate, for straight are the gates, and narrow are the ways leading into life, and few there be who find that by which alone you can pass. There is a certain rule of rectitude for each man suited to few others besides himself, which at his utmost peril he must employ all his circumspection to discern, and all his diligence to pursue.

And we may observe the like maxim holds good with respect to our success in this world: multitudes arrive at a competence of fortune, ease, credit, and enjoyment by very various ways, but the way that will succeed with one man, will answer for few others. The same labours of hand or brain, hardships, and dangers, would be faulty in one, which are necessary duties and commendations to another; nor is it always easy for each to hit upon his right method, and succeed in it, without careful forethought and continual application. For providence has so interwoven the interests of mankind by the distribution of talents and opportunities among them, that each has a particular part to act, by the due performance of which he may most effectually serve himself, and his fellow-creatures.

15. Nor

15. Nor does there want probability of the like intertexture of interests between this world and the next; and that our employments on this present stage, if rightly pursued, are preparatory to the rest of our journey through matter, fitting us for the peculiar functions we shall have to perform in the communion of saints. This seems evidenced by the very various allotments made among us here: some are but just born and die; some are bred up in ignorance, error, and profligateness; some have little more understanding or capacity of looking up to their Maker than the brutes; and others have been raised to extraordinary heights of knowledge and piety that could scarce be credited in human nature.

Therefore, though the promulgation of Christianity upon earth were necessary for the human race in general, yet we must conclude from the limitation set to it by nature and Providence, that it was not necessary for every individual: the interests of the whole being so connected, that the blessings imparted to a few would redound to the benefit of many. For our gracious and righteous Father cannot be supposed so very unequally partial in his most necessary gifts, as his dispensations among us here make him appear to have been: but the elect were chosen,

not so much for their own sakes, as for channels of conveyance by which the waters of life might be diffused among their fellow-creatures both in this world and the next. Hence we are all to consider ourselves as public persons, our talents being distributed among us with a further view beyond the uses we can make of them here, and our very virtues given us for the benefit of others jointly with our own: as we have likewise an interest in theirs, how little soever we may stand concerned with them at present.

This confirms what I have laid down a little before, that obedience to the call of Heaven manifested by the talents and situation assigned us, is our proper rule of conduct: we are not to aspire at extraordinary atchievments nor degrees of sanctity above our forces, for we are instruments employed in the public service, and God knows what service is wanted of us, what abilities and graces are needful to perform it. He was able of the veriest stones to have raised up children unto Abraham; it were a small thing with him to have inspired into us the zeal of Apostles, or the intelligence and seraphic piety of Angels; he might have done it with a word, as when he said, Let there be light: be sure he has given us the endowments requisite

quisite for the part we have to execute in his numerous family of human creatures.

Therefore we need not despond or murmur if we cannot rise to those fervours of Faith and greatness of Works whereof we have seen or heard examples: for there is a duty of content, even with respect to righteousness, not indeed bounded by so many limits as in other things. There may be cases wherein it would be faulty to encrease our riches or our reputation though we could, but here the limitation ought only to be set by our powers: let us then rather rejoice than repine at them, how small soever they be, and be careful to omit no opportunity of improving them; for, small as they are, we shall find them one day turn to more important advantages than we can now be aware of.

We may regard this life as a school to fit us for the employments we are to follow in the world: some go through the whole school, from thence are forwarded to the university, and put upon different lines of learning; some are called off in the midway, and others never put to school at all: the parents are the proper judges whether any and what preparation is necessary for the life to be engaged in afterwards: but the lad who neglects the rudiments of learning judged requi-

site for him, can never regain them afterwards, but must prove a worthless and miserable man. So our lengths and courses of life are wisely allotted us by our heavenly Father, no doubt with a view to future uses: so that he who has little has no lack, and he who has much has nothing over. We are not to hanker after the works assigned to others because we may fancy them more meritorious, but make the best improvements we can of our own time and tasks; for if we neglect our rudiments, we shall go out into the great world of spiritual bodies unfit for any further improvement in the professions we are destined to, useless to the community, and wretched in ourselves.

16. Therefore as boys are not sent to school for sake of the plays and diversions they find there, although allowed as many as consist with their learning; so we are placed in this school of life, not for sake of the enjoyments abounding here, but to qualify us for a much longer life capable of far greater enjoyments and miseries: and we may be sure the line of learning marked out for us by Providence here, is the properest to suit us for the business we shall have to follow hereafter. Nevertheless, our indulgent Father has been pleased to make the mental and bodily happiness of ourselves and our fellow-

fellow-creatures in this world, the mark of direction for us to aim at; this then we are to promote with all our skill and industry, being well assured that in so doing, we shall do our best towards promoting the interests of both in the next.

He has likewise hung out many enjoyments within our reach: those then we may thankfully gather, and even contrive for their procurement; using the good things of this world as possessions, not enslaved by them as captives; laying our measures carefully for the morrow, but taking no thought for what their success shall be on the morrow; pleased with success when it comes, but not expecting it; enjoying, never indulging the gratifications of appetite; pursuing pleasures because we approve the pursuit, not because we cannot help it nor live without them; submitting our will to the Will of Heaven, but submitting desire to the control of our own will. But he has been pleased oftentimes to make labour, trouble, and self-denial, the road to public and private happiness: we must therefore strike into the rugged road, not because it is rugged, but whenever having that tendency pointed out to us by our own observation or rules received from more experienced travellers.

Some exercises of voluntary self-denial are needful

needful to harden our shoulders for the burdens we may have to bear: therefore in the choice of these exercises, we are to regard our situation of life and the works we shall probably be called upon to execute; for obedience is our business, we are to do nothing arbitrarily, nor without the proper call. And in all our difficulties it is our duty and our praise so far to consult present pleasure, as it can be attained by going through them with chearfulness and alacrity: therefore we are voluntarily to engage in those whereof there is a probability we may learn to support them with alacrity, avoiding such as our constitution or natural temper of mind renders us unable ever to go through without galling, for these we are not called to; yet making daily some improvement towards turning things irksome into matters of indifference.

If troubles fall upon us or our dearest friends, greater than we can yet bear without being hurt, they are exercises imposed upon us by our Father for our and their benefit: for there is an endurance of pain, vexation, and labour, acquired mechanically by the frequent repetition of them. If we can help ourselves to hasten the acquisition by our own efforts to patience, it is so much the better; yet however acquired, it is an advantage

tage gained; therefore we have reason to kiss the rod, though not to court it. Nor need we be terrified at the approach of dangers that may befal us, for he will with the temptation also make a way to escape: not always by warding off the blow, but by enabling to escape the evil of it with a firmness of mind superior to the pressure. But whatever improvement of endurance or forbearance we can make any way, is a step towards our adoption and incorporation, whereby we become members of Christ, children of God, and denizens of the kingdom of Heaven.

17. For though it be wholesome and easy of conception to the vulgar, it is extremely hard for the man of reflection, to imagine heaven local; that God has a right hand and a left, or that there is any one seat nearer to him than another. For God is omnipresent, alike almighty, great, and glorious, in every point of space: filling the superceleſtial regions, the starry vortices, the depths of the sea, the bowels of the earth, the mansions of the blessed, and habitations of the reprobate. Therefore it is not change of place, but change of condition, that transports the creature into heaven. Were our faculties so purified and enlarged as that we might see God as he is, we should instantly find ourselves at his right hand without stirring from our

our seats. On the contrary Milton very judiciously describes Satan carrying hell about with him wherever he went: so we may say that while leading between Ithuriel and Zephon, he was in hell and they in heaven; he an outcast banished to an immeasurable distance from the presence of God, they attendant Spirits ministering before the throne of glory.

The Scripture abounds in figures and imagery, and blends them promiscuously together in such manner that it is not always easy to distinguish their several applications; of which we have seen instances in the last Chapter with respect to the Son of God, the Logos, and the two natures of Christ. From hence a handle has been taken for introducing a great deal more of the mysterious and the cabbalistical into our Religion than was needful, or than has done it any good. This inaccuracy of style we may presume was properest for the Jews, as being suitable to their gross taste; but learning being now become more general, and the thoughts of our common Christians having taken a more rational turn, it seems eligible to keep our ideas and our expressions as clear, as steady, and as distinct as we can.

Therefore in my humble opinion it might have been as well, if the compilers of our

Litany

Litany had chosen some other form of words instead of, Spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood; and afterwards by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, Good Lord deliver us: for our prayers here by the introduction are addressed to the holy Trinity, the one God, to whom these expressions seem scarce properly applicable, though they might be to Christ. For we are taught to compare the union of the two natures in Christ with the vital union of soul and body in ourselves, which together make one man. Therefore the man may claim to himself whatever belongs either to his soul or body, and I may properly say, *My understanding, my memory, my blood, and my bones:* but when we speak of them separately, we cannot apply to one what belongs to the other; for it would be absurd to talk of my Body's understanding, my Body's memory, my Soul's blood, or my Soul's bones; and though I must expect to die before many years run out, yet I trust my soul will not die when I do. In like manner it seems as great a solecism in modern language to say the blood, the death, the burial of God, notwithstanding his gracious union with human nature, as it would be to speak of the blood, the death, the

burial

burial of a soul, notwithstanding its vital union with body. Had the phrase run, With the precious blood of thy Christ, by the agony and passion, and so forth, of thy Christ, it might have contained as much devotion and piety, and been less liable to the cavils of the adversary.

But it sometimes happens that men of great learning and true piety, having too much contempt of human reason and disregard of human nature, repeat the words of other good men passing before them without exactly weighing their purport; not considering that an expression which was perfectly proper for one age, may be injudicious in another: nor sufficiently studying that text which teaches, that the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive. So that a man may destroy himself by adhering literally to the Scripture, much more by copying literally the expressions of ancient Fathers, and former doctors of the Church.

The Gospel was preached to the poor, but designed for general use; therefore delivered in a manner conformable to the ways of thinking which generally prevailed at that time. But it is of great importance to distinguish between the fundamental doctrines which ought always to be preserved inviolate, and those accommodated to the conceptions

and prejudices of the vulgar, with which we may lawfully take the necessary liberties for bringing them suitable to the notions current among us at this day. For popular ideas vary greatly in a course of time, and insensibly take a tincture from the notions and discourses of the learned. The discoveries in astronomy and other sciences have given us a very different conception of the ethereal regions from what was entertained of old: and the custom of examining into particulars, and judging for ourselves, have made us more averse against taking things in the gross, without being shewn a consistency in their several parts.

Therefore it might be imprudent to press upon any man the Ascension of a human body, consisting of flesh, blood, bones, entrails, organs of sensation, engines of digestion, and engines of discharge; and a literal session or inhabitancy under that form in a place close by the throne of God, for these things might stagger many well-disposed persons, and give large handle for disputation to such as are ready to take hold of it. Perhaps it would not be heterodox to close the work of the Redemption with the descent into Hades, ascribing the Resurrection, together with all that followed afterwards upon earth, to the power of the Father, not of the Christ.

Christ. For it is not easy to conceive how the most consummate rectitude of Will, or power of endurance and forbearance, could enable a human soul to re-animate its body to convey it through the key-hole when the doors were shut, and mount up with it into the air.

I do not mean to insinuate that these were nothing more than apparitions, for one cannot understand them so without wresting the Scripture violently, especially that appearance wherein Thomas was concerned: but though we cannot deny them to be real facts, we may very consistently with Scripture believe them miraculous facts, wherein God acted in his Paternal, not his Filial character. So that Christ was no more the efficient cause of his resurrection, his entrance into a close room, or his ascension up into the air in a cloud, than Moses was of the rod turning into a serpent, of water gushing from the rock upon a stroke of his wand, or of quails or manna showering down from the air.

Nor were those miracles any otherwise efficacious towards the Redemption, than the other miracles worked during the ministry of Christ upon earth, given for confirmation of Faith in the beholders, not for operating any thing in the constitution of human nature, or compleating the ransom for sin. And when

that

that purpose was answered, that is, as soon as the ascending body was out of sight, it was disposed of in the same manner as the bodies of other men who are dead and rotten; and the human soul was returned back to Hades, or wherever other souls who partake, or stand in a capacity of partaking in the like righteousness, reside.

Therefore I apprehend it advisable to leave every man to form his own conception of the session at the right hand of God, the present condition or employment of the Redeemer, and intercession still continued for mortal men: which conception he will form very variously, according to the degree of grossness or refinement of his imagination. For any set of ideas, best suited to his size of comprehension and usual trains of thinking will suffice; provided they satisfy him, that every thing necessary to be done for his salvation by another, has been fully atchieved; and every assistance requisite for effectuating his endeavours in what still remains to be done by himself, is obtained, and stands ready for him upon his using the methods of applying it prescribed in the Gospel: for this I take to be the sole, material, and fundamental article of Christian Faith.

18. I have now given my idea of the Redemption and other doctrines relative thereto; wherein

wherein to my apprehension they stand in the light of a credible and rational scheme, consistent with the knowledge we derive from experience and observation upon human nature. If it should appear in the same light to others, it will be but just that they should take it for the genuine sense of Scripture, and doctrines of the Church: for where expressions are obscure or capable of various interpretations, every private man, much more the dictates of authority, have a right to be understood in the most rational construction. But credibility, and consonance with reason are not of themselves alone sufficient proofs of a doctrine being true, yet these were all that fell properly under my cognisance: for it must be remembered, that my province is human reason, and I cannot pretend to find any positive proofs of the Christian system within its precincts.

It has been said by an eminent pillar of the Church, that the light of nature leads to the necessity of a Redemption, by discovering the corruption of the soul, depravity of the faculties, and perverseness of the will, which drive us continually into offences against the law of God written in our hearts, and thereby render us obnoxious to divine Justice without hopes of pardon or being able to satisfy it, otherwise than by our end-

less

less punishment. But I must own that my optics are not clear enough to discern these things by the light of nature. I see plainly that man is prone to evil, our appetites get the mastery over our reason, nor do the best of us persevere in an unerring course of righteousness, but offend daily against the Will of God manifested to us by the contemplation of his works; and I fear these offences will draw on their adequate punishment: but why the punishment or the depravity must be perpetual, I do not see.

There are those who tell us that the party offended being infinite, the offence and its consequences must be so too: but we do not find the same rule hold good in offences against our fellow-creatures upon earth, or that the continuance of the delinquent's suffering should be proportioned to the length of life of the party injured. In setting fines for misdemeanors, the Court measures them by the circumstances of the offender; nor will the rule of law, salvo continemento suo, ever permit such to be imposed as must prove his utter ruin: and if an insult be greater when offered to a king than to a cobler, it is because the public are more concerned in one case than the other. Besides, that, strictly speaking, there is no offending against God, for we are incapable of doing damage to him,

and

and without damage and a tendency thereto, there is no wrong doing; for an action that can do hurt to nobody, nor leads into other actions that might be hurtful, cannot be evil: but the damage is done or endangered to the creatures, and God for their sakes exacts the punishment for reparation, or prevention of the mischief.

For he is all goodness and mercy, never terminating his views upon evil: as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the *death of the wicked*, but that he should turn from his evil ways and live. Therefore, when he punishes for the evil ways, he does it not in anger, but in loving kindness, either to the delinquent, or to other creatures in whose interests those of the sufferer are involved, in order to procure some good to both, greater than the suffering sustained: but endless suffering leaves no room for good to redound therefrom. We cannot certainly tell in what manner the sufferings of one creature operate to the benefit of another, but it seems to be by serving as an overbalance against the temptations urging to the like offence as drew them on, and we may be sure will be adequate to that purpose: but it does not from thence appear necessary, they must be infinite either in weight or duration.

And

And for the depravity of our nature, acknowledged to subject us to the actual wickedness we daily commit, we were made human creatures either by an immediate creation just before our birth, or by some law of Providence introducing us into these corporeal organizations we inhabit: and the same Power which for wise and gracious purposes has placed us here, is able to place us in a more favourable situation, where we may have strength of will to pursue invariably such portion of understanding, as he shall please to allot us. Nor since universal Nature, with all her courses and minutest motions, were planned out by the Almighty, can we deny that this improvement of our condition may be effected by stated laws of his establishment; neither that the same laws may have furnished us with the natural forces to work out that little pittance of righteousness it was his design we should attain in this life, without the supernatural assistance of his Holy Spirit; of which, though we have many pretences, we have no certain or rational evidences among us, other than what are drawn from the sacred records.

Therefore I must rank the Redemption with all belonging to it, the Incarnation, the Intercession, effusions of the Holy Ghost, eternity and extremity of punishment, among those

additions in the republication of the law of Nature which were not contained in the first edition; as being never discoverable by human reason, nor could ever have been known otherwise than from Revelation, and those miraculous events that were the testimonials of it: so I must deliver over my Catechumen to the divines, to whose province it belongs to lay before him the positive proofs of a Revelation having been actually given, and of the truths recorded in sacred story: having first prepared him for their reception, by shewing their credibility, and that they may be understood in a sense which carries no repugnance to human reason.

I would desire him to consider further, whether upon the foregoing representation it does not appear, that Christianity contains all that rectitude of sentiment and conduct, which it is the use and aim of the best Philosophy to lead men into; and then let him reflect, whether he can find examples in history of any system of Philosophy having answered its end so effectually among mankind: from whence he may discern it to be a beneficial thing, even before he sees it proved a true one. Some few sages of uncommon capacity and uninterrupted leisure, have run extraordinary lengths of knowledge and virtue, and spread them among their followers

of

of the like contemplative turn: but who of them ever framed a system of general or national use, which could rouze the thoughtless, warm the flegmatic, restrain the impetuous, discipline the unruly, bring the vulgar, the simple, the giddy, and the busy, to think of the things above, to look for an inheritance in a better country, and make preparation for the future health and vigour of their spiritual body?

As to us who were born in a Christian country, and had our education formed upon that plan, if we fancy ourselves able to do every thing by our own skill and prowess, still it would become us to reflect from what sources this sufficiency was derived. Were Christianity to be universally discredited and exploded, perhaps my own morality and tenor of conduct would remain the same it is: but had that been exploded before I was born, I am far from thinking I should ever have attained the little judgment and philosophy for which I now am thankful. For that importance of right opinion and practice, inculcated into me by the nurse and the priest first made me a Search: and put me upon exerting my faculties with caution and industry in the discovery of some things they could not teach me.

Therefore to use a homely saying, we have reason

Digitized with financial assistance from the Government of Maharashtra on 26 June, 2018

reason to speak well of the bridge we have gone over: and it would be an unpardonable selfishness, if because we think ourselves safely landed upon firm ground, we should carelessly suffer the bridge to be broken down in prejudice of other passengers, who may be as little able as ourselves to stem the torrent of youthful passions and fashionable follies, or wade through the mud of indolence, with the slender staff of unripened reason. Having examined some of the principle arches of the bridge supporting the doctrinal part, I proceed next to the practical, composed of three principal compartiments: for as the whole of moral philosophy has been usually divided into the cardinal Virtues, so all the duties of the Gospel are comprehended under the theological Virtues, styled Faith, Hope, and Charity.

END OF VOL. V.

00059735

Bretteil, Printer,
Marshall-St. Golden-sq.